

12th
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The crisis

of

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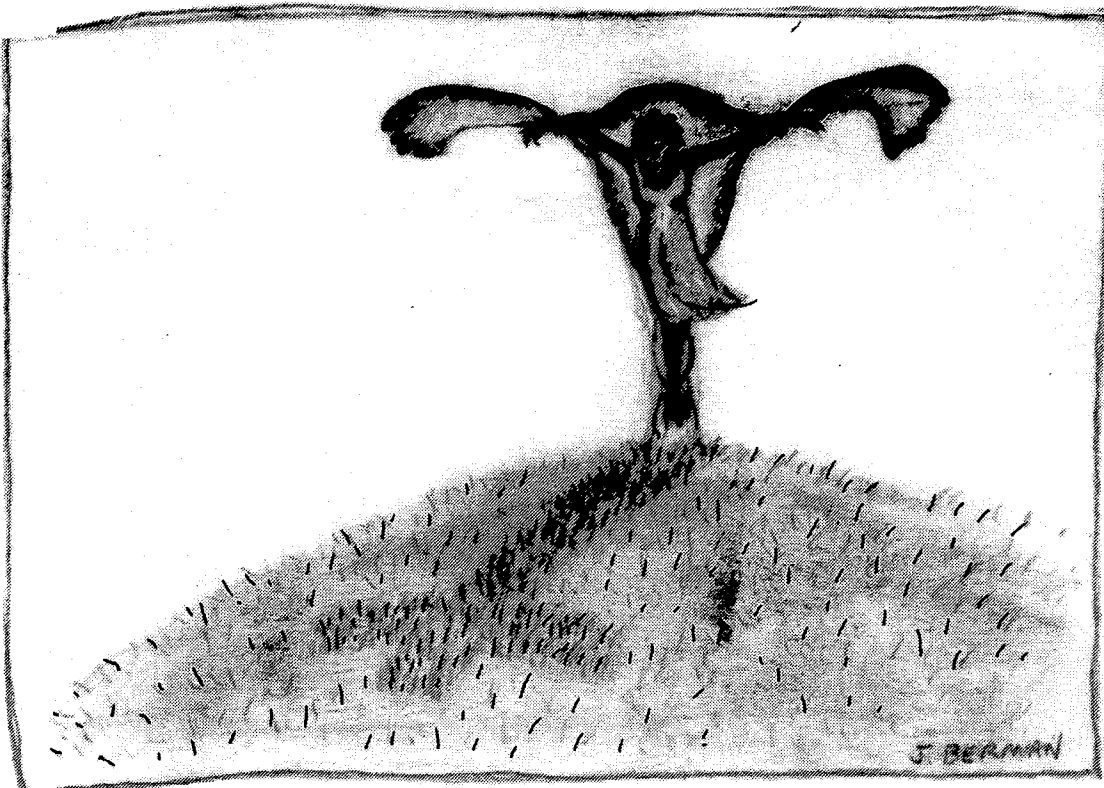
U.S.S.R. and Western Europe

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When the '70s look good...

...things are bad

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Black America's unspoken issue

By Salim Muwakkil

CHICAGO

"Abortion" is a word seldom heard in the councils of African-American leadership. It is avoided—much like the acronym AIDS was initially—because the term forces a focus on one of the black community's most vexing cultural dilemmas: how to reconcile traditional values with contemporary social realities.

Although the "black movement" and the U.S. left see eye-to-eye on most issues, their sources of inspiration are miles apart. The left's strategies are motivated by the secular rationalism of the European Enlightenment, while the African-American struggle is powered primarily by religion. More often than not, the two movements' agendas merged, but certain issues strain the alliance. Abortion is a prime example.

Since religion was the only realm in which slaves were allowed autonomy, the church became the primary repository of black civic energy and leadership. Black leadership is still dominated by the clergy. By and large, this leadership has remained reluctant to tackle questions with moral (read sexual) dimensions. On the rare occasions that they address the issue of abortion, black leaders tend to downplay its significance.

And the issue needs addressing. The rate of unintended pregnancies among young black women has remained

exceedingly high for more than a decade and has exerted a debilitating effect on a community already hammered by an array of social dislocations. The complex questions surrounding the abortion issue—including the decision of whether to abort and how much access to the procedure should be allowed—are questions that should have received a thorough airing by black leadership.

Not much thought: "In my four years on this staff the issue of abortion has never come up," said Deborah Taylor-Lucien, an official with the Chicago Urban League. "We've never given it much thought." Taylor said the Urban League's programs are designed for those "who wanted to keep their children and live more healthy and secure lives." Most major black organizations are similarly silent on the issue of abortion, though they are nominally pro-choice. "We believe that abortion is absolutely immoral, but we support the women's right to free choice," noted one staff worker at the National Black Leadership Roundtable.

"We find that most of the people we serve don't believe in abortion," said JoAnn Chiakulas, project director of the Chicago Urban League's Young Parents Center. Chiakulas, who has worked for many years with inner-city black young people, said abortion is not seen as an option for most of those she counsels. "I find that there seems to be a cultural aversion to abortion among black youth," she said. "Since public aid no longer funds them in Illinois, many couldn't afford it anyway. But most don't even opt for it." But research data seems to refute Chiakulas' anecdotal evidence. "According to our latest study, abortion rates are higher for young black women than for any other group," explained Susan Tew of the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a respected New York-based research group. "We also found an economic correlation: women in low-income families are more than twice as likely to have abortions than others."

Both Tew and Chiakulas disparage the charge that many women use abortion as just another form of contraceptive. "A high proportion of abortion patients are unsuccessful contraceptors," Tew added. "So we're pretty certain that abortion is not being used in lieu of other contraceptive techniques."

And even while abortion rates grow for young black women, the problem of teen pregnancy remains acute. Tew joins many family-planning researchers in urging an expanded federal role in increasing sex education and contraceptive availability to help curtail the high incidence of both abortion and teen pregnancy among black women. But such federal action is strongly opposed by conservatives—including those in the Reagan administration—and they've repeatedly beat back attempts to legislate family-planning programs.

Although the black community is disproportionately affected, black leadership—with some recent exceptions—has shown little enthusiasm in fighting for family-planning

policies. Interestingly, the groups that are pushing hardest for change are those headed by black females, like the Children's Defense Fund, the National Council of Negro Women and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

The genocide scare: A small, but influential segment of the black community condemns abortion as black genocide. "I hope a lot of black people read those statistics about the disproportionate number of blacks having abortions," said Karimah Shabazz, a Philadelphia organizer who has long fought against abortion availability. "It's quite clear to me that white people are trying to get rid of us. If we don't get aborted, we die because of a high infant mortality rate. If we make it through that we get a stunted education in a drug-infested, job-free environment, where guns and anger proliferate."

Shabazz echoes a theme increasingly being heard in many black nationalist groups: blacks are being targeted for genocide. The Nation of Islam has long argued that abortion is a white tool for black genocide and that argument is catching on in certain circles. "What we need to do, aside from getting control of our children's minds and their early education, is to teach them basic values, not a cornucopia of white folks' techniques," wrote Nathan and Julia Hare in a recent column. The husband-wife team, San Francisco-based psychologists and syndicated columnists, are among the most insistent critics of

INSIDE STORY

the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and other family-planning groups.

"By hyping the false impression of mushrooming black teen pregnancy," the Hares wrote in another column, "the white establishment was able to kill three birds with one stone: launch a stepped-up program to denature a fertile black group in the white eugenic determination to cut back on black population growth; blame the black teens who get pregnant for their economic plight...; and justify setting up sex education and clinics to hand out condoms in black schools."

That deeply paranoid perspective has been opportunistically appropriated by black Christian fundamentalists who also oppose family planning of any kind. Rev. Hiram Crawford, a Chicago-based fundamentalist who formerly headed the city's Moral Majority chapter, once told members of his congregation that Planned Parenthood was founded with the mission to wipe blacks out. Crawford once called Faye Wattleton, the black president of Planned Parenthood, a traitor to her race.

High emotions: Although the fervent opinions that charge the abortion issue in the general community are intensified in the black community by a racial dimension, the issue has not yet been as divisive for blacks. The passions aroused by the nationwide abortion clinic demonstrations have not occasioned much debate in the black community.

Still, the tensions are there. Occasionally they come to the surface, as when protests erupted over the presence of school-based health clinics in various inner-city neighborhoods around the country. These clinics offer general health screening, physical examinations, counseling and family-planning services—including the dispensing of contraceptives. Although the clinics have proven effective in reducing unintended pregnancies and abortion rates within the schools they serve, fundamentalist Christians and others—like the Hares—find them objectionable.

While the problems associated with high rates of unintended pregnancies among blacks are multifaceted and demand a comprehensive approach, there are some contraceptive aids that could greatly reduce both pregnancy and abortion rates. Unfortunately, this country's squeamish leadership prefers to reminisce about a mystical golden age of high moral standards rather than make available to U.S. women the more effective contraceptives in use in many other parts of the world. Clergy-heavy black leadership shares in this American failing.

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By Kevin Kelly

Who'll save the savings and loans?

ED MCBIRNEY HAD A REPUTATION AS A PARTY animal. For Halloween 1984 the owner of Dallas-based Sunbelt Savings and Loan Association dressed as a king and offered guests their choice of lion, pheasant or antelope meat. McBirney, pulling in a six-figure income, had transformed Sunbelt into a \$1.3-billion institution through real estate speculation. The savings and loan (thrift) was so famous for outgunning the competition that it became known as "Gunbelt."

Today McBirney and hundreds of other thrift owners like him are out of business. But these financial wildcatters left behind a ravaged industry. There are 3,000 thrifts in the U.S. About 1,000 of them are losing money—a total of \$7 billion in 1988. More than half the money-losers—like Sunbelt—are insolvent. Their loans are worthless and many of them possess real estate with little or no value.

Most experts think these thrifts—based mainly in California, Florida, Georgia and Texas—should be closed. But there's a catch: paying off their depositors, who are protected by federal insurance, could cost \$100 billion. Articulating a growing consensus on Capitol Hill, House Banking Committee member Rep. Henry Gonzalez (D-TX) says, "A taxpayer bailout is the only option I see."

Given the escalating nature of the crisis, the next administration is likely to make some move against the thrift industry within its first 100 days. Congress is now worried the crisis could undermine confidence in the financial system, triggering a dollar run that those papering over the budget deficit can least afford.

Moreover, many now admit the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation (FSLIC) hasn't the resources or the staff to manage the crisis. All summer it has flailed away at its Southwest Plan, merging sick thrifts and trying to sell others. In late summer it put together several deals, including one that turned over the nation's largest and sickest thrift to billionaire corporate-raider Robert M. Bass.

That sale frightened many industry watchers who fear financiers like Bass will simply use federally insured deposits in risky take-over deals. "That's what got us in this problem in the first place," says one thrift owner.

Many thrift experts wish that the federal government would avoid repeating past errors and move quickly to resolve the crisis. Says Tony Montero, a Dallas-based thrift industry consultant, "FSLIC is just putting off the inevitable [bailout]."

Roots of the crisis: The thrift industry hasn't always been so controversial. Back in the '40s it started out at the local level, with institutions making mortgage loans to help people buy houses. But with its role usurped by the growth of mortgage-backed securities and new lending institutions, including General Motors, thrifts drifted into an identity crisis.

That identity crisis spawned a fiscal crisis. The industry was already starting to skid in the late '70s, when regulations restricted the interest thrifts could pay depositors and higher-yield, money-market funds became available. In 1980 the federal government eased the interest-rate cap, but then the in-

terest thrifts paid depositors failed to keep pace with interest earned on loans. A year later thrifts were paying depositors an average of 11 percent, while getting only 10 percent on 30-year, fixed-rate mortgages.

In 1982 Congress decided to help the ailing industry by deregulating it. The Garn-St. Germain Act allowed thrifts to branch out into new lending territories, including both real estate and business loans. This freedom attracted a new breed of thrift owner—high-rollers like McBirney, who saw an opportunity to make big money using federally insured cash to buy risk-laden, high-yield assets.

These mavericks began searching for deposits to bankroll their adventures. Money brokers arose to service them, bringing new funds in the form of \$100,000 certificates of deposit. These "jumbo CDs," which earned interest at higher than the prevailing rate, became known as "hot money." On any given day institutional and individual investors shopped the market, seeking the highest rates. Limiting each deposit to \$100,000 gave investors federal protection.

"These investors didn't care what the thrift did with their money," says one industry analyst, "because they knew whatever happened, the money was insured."

No rules but their own: With ready cash and new powers, many thrifts went wild. Sunbelt grew 5,200 percent over three years making loans in the volatile Dallas real estate market. Butterfield Savings and Loan in Santa Ana, Calif., quintupled its assets in 1983 to \$492 million. It bought fast-food franchises and lost heavily. Sunrise Savings and Loan in Boynton Beach, Fla., grew from \$5 million to \$1.5 billion in assets between 1980 and 1985, often investing in speculative real estate deals.

These thrift entrepreneurs lived by their own rules. They closed deals with handshakes, often doing no research into the

value of the land or the company they were lending on. Number-crunching bored them. Instead they organized "land flips," successive sales of a land parcel that inflated the value and produced good income for each seller in the chain of deals.

By 1985 the Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB), which oversees the thrift industry, sputtered into action. Then-Chair Edwin Gray recognized that thrift were loaning far too much on speculative projects. But his attempts to end this were foiled. The Reagan administration, dedicated to deregulation, refused to give Gray more money to hire bank examiners.

Moreover, influential members of Congress who received big donations from thrift owners pressed the FHLBB to lay off their favorite thrifts. House Speaker Jim Wright (D-TX) raised \$240,000 from thrifts for his 1986 campaign, 20 percent of his total war chest. Not surprisingly, Wright intervened for thrift owners on several occasions. Meanwhile, industry lobbyists thwarted any attempts to re-regulate the industry.

But the collapse of oil prices in 1985 set off a chain reaction, leading to the collapse of real estate values in the Southwest. Suddenly hundreds of thrifts were insolvent.

In 1986 the FSLIC ran out of money, but the games continued. Fearing new cash would be used to liquidate insolvent thrifts, the industry lobbied hard to limit FSLIC's recapitalization. During the summer of 1987 Congress responded, authorizing FSLIC to issue a paltry \$10.8 billion in bonds.

What next? So far the FHLBB has committed \$21 billion in its various rescue efforts—that's \$11 billion more than its budget. Present FHLBB Chair M. Danny Wall argues that he'll make up the difference by charging higher insurance premiums, but any such move would likely initiate a revolt from the owners of healthy thrifts, who are already burdened by excessive premiums.

That leaves the problem to the taxpayers. FSLIC would use the \$100 billion to bail out the insolvent thrifts and pay off their depositors. Many industry experts, like Virginia-based consultant Bert Ely, expect the rest of the thrifts to be rechartered as banks.

"America doesn't need a housing finance industry anymore," he says.

Moreover, as banks, the former thrifts would face higher capital requirements and tougher supervision from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

Congress is also seriously looking at reforming deposit insurance. Rather than insuring accounts to \$100,000, some suggest a figure like \$40,000. "This would force those who want to take advantage of high CD rates to accept the risk of their investment," says one former thrift owner.

Undoubtedly, many share the blame for the crisis. Congress held up regulatory action and the Reagan administration thoughtlessly deregulated. Both encouraged an easy-money, casino mentality among thrift owners just as they did among stockbrokers.

But the industry itself, with worn out purpose, should shoulder much of the blame. It tolerated and encouraged bad business practices, falling victim to the greed that has so dominated '80s corporate culture.

Still, there's a wild card. Having promised not to raise taxes, the next president may feel compelled to let the problem fester even longer. Already an effort to establish a bipartisan congressional commission to recommend solutions to the crisis has failed, killed two weeks ago by Reagan administration opposition.

If a solution isn't found soon, the final tally will stretch beyond \$100 billion and the fiscal crisis could engulf the entire financial system. □

Kevin Kelly is a Dallas-based journalist who writes on business issues.

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IN SHORT

By Joel Bleifuss



"Don't mourn, organize"—and win

This week is perhaps a good time to remember Joe Hill, and to note that he is still with us. Ashes that were once the flesh and bones of the legendary Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) organizer, cartoonist and songwriter have been discovered in the National Archives in Washington. Hill, who had earned the enmity of Western mine owners, was killed by a Utah state firing squad on Nov. 19, 1915, after being framed for the murder of a Salt Lake City grocer. The night before his execution Hill wrote his final poem:

JOE HILL'S LAST WILL

My will is easy to decide,
For there is nothing to divide,
My kin don't need to fuss and moan—
"Moss does not cling to a rolling stone."
My body? Ah, if I could choose,
I would to ashes it reduce,
And let the merry breezes blow,
My dust to where some flowers grow.
Perhaps some fading flower then
Would come to life and bloom again.
This is my last and final will
Good luck to all of you.

Hill had requested that his body not be left to rot in Utah, so it was taken to Chicago and cremated at Graceland Cemetery—final resting place for various Pullmans, McCormicks and Palmers. It is not known how Hill's ashes ended up in a packet at the National Archives, but after months of negotiations it has been agreed that his remains will be turned over to the IWW on November 18. Consequently the Chicago-based "Wobblies" are asking for suggestions as to what to do with the ashes of Joe Hill. In light of the 1988 election, do you have an idea? If so send it to In Short Ashes Contest, *In These Times*, 1300 West Belmont, Chicago, Ill. 60657. All suggestions will be forwarded to the IWW. "Winning" ideas received before November 18 will be published in this column. Winners will receive the coffee-table art book, *Images of Labor*.

Trouble's brewin'

Colorado beer barons William and Joseph Coors, ever true to their far-right political convictions, have succeeded in making the Adolph Coors Company "the company Americans most love to hate," reports Bella Stumbo of the *Los Angeles Times*. A few years ago the two Coors patriarchs turned day-to-day operations of the company over to the next generation. Some thought things in Coors country might then settle down. Not so, according to Stumbo. It seems that Joseph Coors, 71, has run out on Holly, his wife of 48 years, and moved to the wine country of Northern California with a younger woman. Son Jeff Coors, the new president of Adolph Coors Co., is concerned—concerned for his father's soul. In the eyes of his family, Joseph Coors is an adulterer and as such joins the ranks of homosexuals, gluttons, blasphemers, murderers and liars. All five of Joseph's sons, inspired



Graphic images: "My purpose is to give the collective imagination something accurate and graphic to hang onto as it strives to come to terms with the bomb's reality," writes Robert Del Tredici in the preface to his photo-documentary *At Work in the Fields of the Bomb* (Harper and Row). Del Tredici's photographs and their explanatory captions lead readers to the eerie possibility that what they are looking at could be oracles of our collective entry into eternal nothingness.

Del Tredici gives us a portrait of Tsue Hayashi of Nagasaki (above left), who tells of the 21 days following the blast that she spent searching for her 15-year-old daughter Kayoko. "I found her on the top floor of the Shiroyama Primary School," says Hayashi. "This was the third time I had gone up there to look for her.... During the war I made an air-raid hood for Kayoko out of my cotton kimono. I heard cotton did not burn easily.... When upstairs this time at the Shiroyama Primary School, I noticed a piece of that air-raid hood. I said, 'What's that?' and ran over to it. There I found the upper part of my child's body. It was half-burned. There was no lower part remaining. Everything else on the third floor had been burned completely. Other people's bones were burned and had become like pieces of small gravel. But my child's bones remained intact, even though there was no meat on them. And the shape of my child's mouth formed an 'ah' sound, as if she was saying 'Ka-a-a-a.' When I saw that, I thought my child must have been calling 'O-ka-cha-ma' ['Mommy'] before she died."

Then there is Russel B. Clanahan, public information officer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. His job is to sell the public on the idea of "crisis relocation planning." Clanahan describes the benefits of such planning: "If all deterrence fails and there should be a nuclear attack, then you could save tens of millions of people simply by having moved them out to dispersed host areas where they make much less inviting targets, and where only fallout is a nuclear hazard, not blast and fire.... It's relative protection; either relatively more people could be saved, or relatively less people could be saved. There is no question that if we could deter a nuclear war in any reasonable way—short of national humiliation—we should do so." Clanahan explains that under FEMA's plans, it would take one or two days in "advance of a nuclear detonation" to get the population of a small city relocated to a "host area." Larger cities would take three days. While "certain problem areas like New York or Los Angeles" might require up to a week's notice.

Would Jesus check green cards?

Three Roman Catholic priests in Los Angeles are emerging as leaders of a growing national resistance to the nation's immigration laws, following the second anniversary of the controversial Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) on November 6.

The priests vow to continue openly and loudly defying the law despite warnings by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and pressure from Archbishop Roger Mahoney of Los Angeles.

The three men are vigorously supported by their parishioners, many of whom fasted October 30 through November 6 to show support for their priests and opposition to the law. Hundreds of them are illegal aliens who did not qualify for amnesty under IRCA.

These residents cannot legally be hired by employers because of IRCA employer-sanctions provisions. But Rev. Gregory Boyle, pastor of Dolor-es Mission in East Los Angeles, and Revs. Luis Olivares and Michael Kennedy from Our Lady Queen of Angels in downtown Los Angeles have openly hired illegal aliens and have refused to fill out forms on new employees as required by the INS.

"The simple test we use to decide what to do is this: what would Jesus do?" said Boyle. "Would he ask for papers before he would give someone a job they need to feed their family? Of course not."

On September 21 the *Los Angeles Times* published an op-ed article by the priests in which they announced



Howard Ezell

their beliefs and intentions: "When laws trample human rights, they must not be obeyed. When policies subordinate the needs and rights of people to order and convenience, they must be denounced. To the extent that we openly aid, abet and harbor the undocumented, we indeed are breaking the law. The gospel would have us do no other."

Howard Ezell, Western regional INS director, reacted sharply to the priests' announcement. He denounced the priests, ordered an investigation into their activities and accused them of inciting violence. He even blamed them for the actions of an angry Salvadoran refugee who on September 20 smashed several plate-glass windows in the Los Angeles federal building to express his opposition to IRCA.

A week later INS agents entered a Catholic church in Orange County during Mass and arrested seven men. The agents had been conducting a street sweep near the church

that morning and believed some men who had been waiting for day-labor buses had ducked into the church. Orange County's Bishop Norman McFarland was furious at what he called the "stupid and irresponsible" actions of the INS. A few days later Archbishop Mahoney also criticized the INS.

Ezell assured Mahoney that the raid was "an isolated, regrettable situation" that would not happen again. Mahoney then held a press conference in which he too denounced the employer-sanctions provisions of IRCA. But instead of calling for defiance of the law, he urged advocacy to change the law. He vowed that in the meantime all members of the archdiocese would obey the law.

Of the three priests he said, "I have met with them and reviewed their policies and their actions, and I have instructed them that as members of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles they are required to follow the policies and directives of the archdiocese."

Still, the priests continue to defy the law. Boyle said he has not seen or heard evidence of any INS investigation. "It's clear Ezell wants us out of here, but that's only if he's foolish enough to make martyrs out of us," he said. As for the archbishop's orders, Boyle said, "I don't think anybody wants a head-on collision. We're continuing our dialogue with the archbishop."

If and when a showdown comes, its outcome will be watched around the nation by at least 400 other congregations of all denominations that have already declared their intention to defy the law.

—Bill Kenkelen

Crimson unionism

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.—Harvard University deserves its staid reputation. On any given day, preppie preprofessional students flock to the lectures of Reagan advisers Richard Pipes and Martin Feldstein. The paucity of left voices on campus is striking. The countercultural cafes and bookstores that once surrounded Harvard Square have been replaced by posh shops. The square has taken on the look of a yuppie heaven.

It was for this reason that something seemed out of place at Harvard's Sanders Theater on the afternoon of October 24. Hundreds of union, community and student activists had gathered to hear Jesse Jackson speak on behalf of the embattled Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW) and the equally troubled Dukakis campaign. As the rally began, HUCTW leaders were unexpectedly informed that the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) had just ruled against Harvard's challenge to the union's victorious May 1988 certification election (see *In These Times*, July 22, 1987 and "In Short," June 22, 1980). The news was whispered into Jackson's ear, and he announced it to the audience. Within moments the

jubilant crowd erupted into deafening pro-union chants. In the Ivy League, such raucous outbursts of emotion are a rare sight.

HUCTW supporters had a lot to be happy about. After 15 years of unsuccessful organizing drives at Harvard, HUCTW had succeeded where many other unions had failed.

The Harvard workforce is an unusually diverse one. Elderly faculty wives work alongside young single mothers. Finding common ground among such people was no easy organizing task. But things were made somewhat easier by the fact that more than 80 percent of Harvard's clerical and technical workers are women (94 percent of the tenured faculty are men); not coincidentally, women's issues—particularly child-care and pay equity—were at the fore of organizing efforts. Yet these issues were consistently linked to a broader theme: the idea of "empowerment," the simple but deeply democratic idea that workers should have some control over their workplace.

Harvard had responded to the May victory in a predictable manner. Charging that the HUCTW victory was fraudulent, Harvard president and Great-Society-liberal-turned-union-buster Derek Bok had accused HUCTW of "coercing" workers into voting for the union. Yet

as the NLRB ruled, the charges were unfounded: as the union had long claimed, its bring-out-the-vote effort was energetic but otherwise typical.

National labor leaders welcomed the NLRB ruling. As they know, the labor movement will have to organize white-collar female workers like those at Harvard if it is to survive as a political force. The Harvard experience, like a similar union drive and victory at Yale four years ago, suggests that a strategy focusing on women's issues and workplace democracy, rather than traditional economic demands, is attractive to today's increasingly feminized, white-collar workforce. The labor movement needs to transform its public image as a selfish "special interest." Organizing strategies like those at Yale and Harvard that focus on feminist and democratic themes may provide the antidote to right-wing and neoliberal visions of American unionism.

HUCTW will have to follow up all its feminist and democratic talk with concrete steps to challenge corporate control and patriarchal power. And given Harvard's history, that will be no easy task. Harvard has never taken kindly to emotional outbursts—especially when its privilege is at stake.

—W.E. Schenerman

by mother Holly, are self-described born-again Christians. In fact on his company resume, oldest son Joe Jr. lists "Biblical prophecy" and golf as his two hobbies. The Coors brothers and their mom are waiting for the end of the world, at which time Jesus will come and collect the faithful. Joe, the family prophet, expects such a visit around the year 2000. The Coors clan hope that before the Rapture their adulterous father will fundamentally change his ways. Explains Jeff, "We're all praying for him. Regularly."

Walrus tears

As President Reagan was on the telephone expressing his concern for the icebound gray whales, plans were underway to begin the administration-approved 1989 slaughter of 600 fin and minke whales under the auspices of "scientific whaling." Reagan has signed a bilateral agreement with Norway, Iceland and Japan that allows those countries to kill the whales for the purpose of "scientific research." Environmentalists fear that the administration's willingness to sign bilateral agreements to allow whale kills will interfere with the International Whaling Commission's efforts to end commercial whaling. According to David Phillips, director of the San Francisco-based Earth Island Institute, "Scientific whaling is a sham. The Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission and the vast majority of marine biologists reject killing whales for scientific study.... This is just more of the Reagan 'Don't worry, be happy' mentality at work: express concern about three whales trapped in Alaska while the TV cameras are rolling, but allow 600 whales to be hunted down and brutally harpooned while nobody's watching."

...except Congress

As David Brower of the Earth Island Institute recently observed, "Congress should be protecting marine mammals like dolphins and whales, instead of protecting a few greedy corporations." But, as usual, what Congress should do never interferes with what it does. According to the National Marine Fisheries Service, in the past two years the international tuna industry has, in the process of harvesting tuna, killed more than 200,000 dolphins. For some unknown reason dolphins often swim with tuna schools. Now it seems that the U.S.-based companies that sell tuna—Pillsbury, Ralston-Purina and Heinz—have been calling in a few favors. Congress recently passed legislation to allow the U.S. tuna industry to use underwater explosives to herd dolphins and, with them, tuna. Said Todd Steiner of the Earth Island Institute, "When we charged the industry with illegally using bombs on dolphins, they denied it. When we provided proof, the industry reversed itself and asked Congress to legalize it.... [Alaska Republican Rep. Dan Young] justified the use of bombs by saying, 'A deaf dolphin is better than a dead dolphin.' That's ridiculous: any marine biologist can tell you that a deaf dolphin is a dead dolphin."



Safe for democracy

A photo of slain human rights worker Herbert Anaya, gunned down by a Salvadoran death squad a little over a year ago, is now being displayed on billboards in the public transport systems of New York, Washington, Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco and, as pictured above, Chicago. The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador hopes this message will get Americans wondering exactly what the U.S. government is buying with the \$1.5 million in aid it sends to the Salvadoran government each day.

By David Moberg

How "L" came to be the scarlet letter

FINALLY, NEAR THE END OF HIS CAMPAIGN, Michael Dukakis owned up to being a "liberal." But for a couple of months George Bush, pronouncing the "L-word" with a derisory sneer, was able to define the term. Dukakis simply whined about being labeled, confirming a sense that there must be something wrong with the politics that dare not speak its name.

It looked like the final collapse of a political tradition. Liberalism was taking a terrible drubbing with nobody to defend it. What had happened?

Never the dominant way people described themselves politically, even during high points of liberal national government, "liberal" is a label only 18 percent of the electorate chose in recent *New York Times*/CBS polling. Thirty-two percent of those polled called themselves conservative and 44 percent moderate. The Gallup study for the *Los Angeles Times* even concluded earlier this year that the terms "liberal" and "conservative" had become "as relevant as the words 'Whig' and 'Federalist.'" Instead, the study divided voters into 11 separate political categories.

As journalist Sidney Blumenthal argued in *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment*, Ronald Reagan managed to knit together his coalition out of this fragmented electorate partly by elaborating a powerful myth that a return to a simple, carefree, omnipotent America could be reached through the magic of slashing big government. But the Democrats have lost any comparable ability to reassemble their fragmented constituency with a unifying, compelling sense of mission. Dukakis threw in the towel in his convention speech when he declared that competence, not ideology, was the issue.

Bush and his unwitting but persuasive ally, rapist Willie Horton, certainly proved that wrong. The Republican didn't express a powerful unifying myth in the Reagan manner; he simply imposed a pejorative label on Dukakis. Bush associated liberalism with a general softness, especially on crime and defense; alien values; threats to the family; rampant permissiveness; anti-Americanism; and radicalism.

Before the curse: That's a long way from Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who adopted the "liberal" label and gave it a modern and positive meaning. FDR's "practical liberalism" was, many have argued, a distinctive, improvised and watered-down version of European social democracy. It was also built on earlier foundations of "corporate liberalism," a corporate-dominated reformism that stabilized and systematized capitalism while placating popular discontent. The older "liberal" tradition in America, according to historian Louis Hartz, exalted private property, individualism and equality of opportunity in the free market.

Sociologist Theda Skocpol argued that New Deal "practical liberalism" was weakened even in the late '30s for three reasons. Many farmers helped by the early New Deal, along with Southern conservative Democrats, failed to support later New Deal measures aimed at the cities or the rural poor. In addition, New Deal liberals never institutionalized a system of economic planning. And, perhaps most significantly, the New Deal was justified not in terms of the cooperative social good but "as safeguarding



Liberalism has fallen on hard times in the decades since Franklin Delano Roosevelt adopted the label and gave it positive meaning.

traditional American values of liberty and individualism," Skocpol wrote.

After World War II the economic programs of liberalism were even more compromised, especially by being tied to Cold War anti-

LIBERALISM

communism and continued high military spending. But the New Deal had not yet crumbled. Even if the New Dealers who wanted greater economic planning lost out, there were still broad-based programs for education, housing, highways and other tickets to the suburban American dream (many justified as veterans' or defense programs).

Postwar liberalism did not confront the economic dominance of big corporations, and increasingly Democrats were barely distinguishable from Republicans in promoting corporate tax breaks to spur economic growth. Also, liberalism dramatically tripped up on its imperial adventures, especially in Vietnam. And eventually the civil rights movement forced a confrontation with the white Southern Democrats.

Losing touch: With many of President Johnson's Great Society programs, "the liberal agenda moved from majoritarian welfarism to minority welfarism, and it lost its grip on national feelings," said political scientist Michael Walzer of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, N.J. Racism and the reaction against '60s programs for the poor, wrongly seen as mainly black, led to white flight from the Democratic Party. Consultant Ann Lewis, former political director of the Democratic National Committee, argues, "Our problem was, having got identified with civil rights, we haven't done enough things afterward...to enact policies that appear to hold out equal hope for everybody." *Chicago Tribune* columnist Mike Royko was typically more blunt: "liberal" came to mean "nigger-lover." And the still-dominant image of "liberal"—"big spender"—is really an objection primarily to a very specific spending: for blacks.

Liberalism also got identified, not always accurately, with '60s leftism and counterculture, getting tarred with both an unpopular war in Vietnam and an unpopular anti-war movement. In the '70s the U.S. was immersed in a newly competitive international economy and subjected to external oil-price shocks. Productivity grew slowly, inflation rose, real incomes declined, middle-class taxpayers were squeezed and the government's economic policies seemed ineffective. Economic growth had given liberalism some room, but stagnation squeezed it. And America no longer ruled the world roost so clearly.

The civil rights revolution contributed to a widening movement for rights often fought out in the courts rather than in legislatures and elections (see story on opposite page). The victories there, even if justified, carried a political price. "Maybe it would have been better to win politically over the long run than to stir up a movement in opposition on many things won with a clever lawyer and a brief," Walzer speculated.

The continued perplexing irony for people on the left is that public opinion seems strongly—now even more than a few years ago—on the side of many "liberal" programs, except welfare. Majorities favor increased spending for most major domestic needs, such as education, health, childcare and the environment. But there are big worries about how effective government programs are and about who should pay for them. And without a strong alternative vision, conservative ideology triumphs.

Policy begins at home: Actually, according to sociologist Richard Flacks, author of *Making History: The American Left and the American Mind*, "the key to mainstream ideology in this country is commitment to everyday life that people think they're entitled to." People are motivated, he says, by a sense of threat to their everyday lives. Bush highlighted fears of crime and disruption of family life, which he blamed on supposed liberal permissiveness. He made them seem

more real to voters than threats from corporate takeovers, militarism, trade deficits, inadequate childcare or bad schools. "If the attitude is protective, then the word 'conservative' resonates better," Flacks said. Nonetheless, liberal politicians have built successful campaigns by showing voters how they are threatened by corporations, the military or pollution.

Fred Siegel, professor of humanities at Cooper Union in New York, argues that liberals have become obsessed with a legalistic approach to all problems. Liberals have also lost their association with rituals of community, the symbols Reagan and Bush misappropriated.

The issue of "liberal" procedural protections, such as due process, interfering with other social goals comes up most forcefully with regard to crime, police and the courts. The task for liberals is not to abandon the procedural safeguards and the Bill of Rights but to find ways to make sure that ultimate goals—such as safe neighborhood streets—can be guaranteed along with individual rights.

But liberals and their allies would do well to stress more forcefully a combination of rights and responsibilities by citizens—and corporations—rather than focus overwhelmingly on rights. That shift in focus could help to build a more community-minded sense of solidarity as a counterpoint to America's rampant individualism. The framework of responsibility can also be used for the much-needed restraint on corporate power.

Maybe, as political scientist Walter Dean Burnham argues, Reagan has so captured the "ideological high ground" that liberals won't succeed until "Republicans screw up something people care about deeply." But if there is any lesson in Dukakis' encounter with the "L-word," it is that liberals—even people who call themselves "progressives," "populists" or "leftists"—can't make much headway if they are not prepared to defend their views politically and to win the consent of the governed. □

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

NOT SINCE 1964, WHEN BARRY GOLDwater was tarred for his association with the John Birch Society, has a candidate's organizational affiliation loomed so large in a presidential election. In his stump speeches and in both debates Vice President George Bush attacked Gov. Michael Dukakis for being a "card-carrying member" of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Bush used this issue demagogically. Whether the ACLU and Dukakis think, as Bush claims they do, that the movie-rating system is unconstitutional has little bearing on how the next president will deal with the trade deficit or with U.S.-Soviet relations. By bringing up the ACLU, Bush was evoking a set of unfavorable cultural associations rather than making a statement about presidential policy. Furthermore, by repeatedly using the words "card-carrying member," Bush cynically and falsely linked Dukakis—and the ACLU—with communism.

But as the campaign itself ended, certain nagging questions about Bush's attack remained. Why did Bush's attack against the ACLU strike such a responsive chord—so much so that after the first Bush-Dukakis debate in September Bush headquarters were flooded with calls praising the candidate's anti-ACLU tirade? Is the ACLU's unpopularity among voters simply a function of its defending unpopular clients like the Nazi Party or the Ku Klux Klan? Or has the ACLU brought some of its problems upon itself?

Hot button: Part of the ACLU's unpopularity is endemic to the organization's purposes. Founded in 1920 by anti-war radical Roger Baldwin, the ACLU has always defended unpopular minorities against majorities that want to abridge their rights. In 1925 it sued the state of Tennessee on behalf of science teacher John Scopes, who had violated the law against teaching evolution. In 1942 ACLU affiliates came to the defense of interned Japanese-Americans. In 1969 it defended the right of a Ku Klux Klan leader to advocate violence. In 1977 it defended the right of Nazis to march in the predominantly Jewish town of Skokie, Ill.

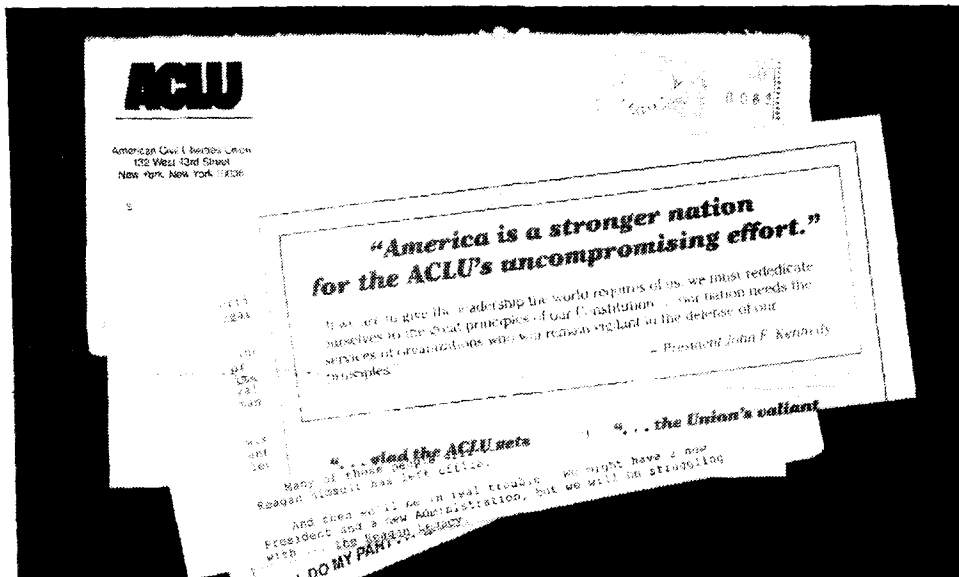
"The unpopularity of its clients has rubbed off on the ACLU," says Aryeh Neier, who was ACLU director from 1968 to 1978.

Until the '60s the ACLU was a relatively small organization that was little-known outside of legal and opinion-making circles. It confined itself largely to First Amendment cases—to questions of civil liberties rather than civil rights. Its unpopularity did not extend much beyond its legal antagonists. But beginning in 1964, when its Atlanta office became active in the civil rights movement, the ACLU expanded its membership, its purview and its potential for unpopularity.

By the mid-'70s its membership had grown from 45,000 to 250,000, and it had launched major projects to end the Vietnam War, impeach Richard Nixon and abolish the death penalty. It was in the forefront of the movement for the rights of women, soldiers, the mentally ill, prisoners and homosexuals. It was the principal legal defender of the Supreme Court's ruling for abortion rights and against prayer in schools, and the principal opponent of attempts to weaken the Warren Court's rulings on the rights of suspected criminals.

Because of these stands, the resolutely non-partisan ACLU found itself on one side of what historian Christopher Lasch has called the cultural civil war. Whether or not

How the ACLU left itself open to right-wing attacks



ACLU members voted for George McGovern in 1972, they were "McGovernites" in the political demonology created by Richard Nixon and George Wallace, identified with the proponents of abortion, busing and permissiveness toward criminals, pornographers, homosexuals and atheists.

The ACLU's defense of the Nazis strengthened this perception. In May 1977, 500 irate citizens, many of them Jewish, demonstrated in front of the ACLU's Manhattan headquarters.

In the succeeding decade, the ACLU won back many of the members it lost during the Nazi case. Its membership has climbed back to 250,000, and its legal and legislative arms are stronger than ever. But it has become, if anything, even more unpopular among many of the white, middle-class and upper-middle-class Americans who voted for Nixon in 1972 and for Reagan in 1980 and 1984. These erstwhile Democrats view the ACLU not as a defender of rights, but as an enemy of traditional culture and civic order.

Last spring the Bush campaign discovered this when it ran focus groups among middle-class "Reagan Democrats." When Dukakis' membership in the ACLU was brought up, these voters invariably reacted negatively. The Bush campaign decided to use the ACLU, along with the Pledge of Allegiance and the Willie Horton furlough case, to drive a wedge between Dukakis and the Reagan Democrats.

In Macomb County, Mich., which includes the white, working-class suburbs north of Detroit, the *Detroit Free Press* asked voters in early October whether they had a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the ACLU. While two-thirds had no opinion, the remaining one-third broke down with 65 percent having an unfavorable opinion and 35 percent a favorable one. In white middle-class Brooklyn, historian Fred Siegel discovered enormous antipathy to the ACLU. "If I mentioned the ACLU, I was surprised at the vehemence of the reaction," Siegel told *In These Times*. In downstate Collinsville, Ill., an ACLU lawyer asked a judge to keep her organizational affiliation from the jury so as not to prejudice her case. The judge agreed.

Constitutionalizing everything: The main reason for the ACLU's unpopularity stems from its historic defense of civil liberties and civil rights. For instance, the ACLU helped sue the city of Pawtucket, R.I., for using public money to display a crèche at Christmastime. It challenged an Arkansas law that required the teaching of

creationism. It has defended AIDS victims who were fired and homeless New Yorkers who were forced into dangerous city shelters against their will. It defended the Palestine Liberation Organization when Congress tried to close its offices both in Washington and at the U.N.

But the ACLU may also have provided some ammunition for its critics. They distinguish the ACLU's defense of civil liberties from its "political agenda." In the second debate, Bush said, "I have enormous difference with the ACLU on their political agenda, not on their defending some minority opinion on the right or the left." While much of what

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Bush labels "political" is legitimately constitutional, the ACLU has extended itself well beyond its original conception as an organization dedicated to defending the Bill of Rights. This can be traced to the mid-'60s.

In February 1968 the ACLU filed an amicus curiae brief on behalf of Dr. Benjamin Spock and others who had been charged by the government with urging young men to violate the Selective Service Act. The ACLU brief focused on the defendants' right of free speech. But prodded by the Boston affiliate, the ACLU changed its stand and decided to take the case itself, even though Spock

"The unpopularity of its clients has rubbed off on the ACLU," says the organization's former director.

wanted the defense lawyers to raise such issues as the constitutionality of the war and the draft. The decision—reached after a bitter battle within the organization—took the ACLU away from a focus on the Bill of Rights and civil liberties; it also potentially involved it as a partisan in the anti-war movement. Then in 1970 the ACLU, under Neier's leadership, decided to join in suits brought against the war's constitutionality, arguing that the president had usurped Congress' war-making powers.

During the '70s the ACLU began to expand beyond purely constitutional issues to take political positions—that is, positions on is-

ues that are appropriate to legislatures rather than courts. For instance, to stem the AIDS epidemic among drug users, it advocates supplying free "clean, disposable hypodermics." It also uses means beyond constitutional judgment to achieve its ends. Having lost the constitutional battle to outlaw the death penalty, the ACLU's Capital Punishment Project now seeks to stop executions "by litigation, legislation, commutation or by the weight of a reviewed public outcry against this brutal and brutalizing institution." Frank Askin, general counsel for the ACLU, said, "We don't always make the distinction between the political and the constitutional."

Within the organization itself there have been constant struggles since the '60s to widen the Constitution's reach. According to one knowledgeable observer, these struggles do not simply reflect new political circumstances. They are also the result of initiatives by politically active lawyers who in earlier times would have joined the more openly political National Lawyers Guild. As new movements and causes have arisen, the young lawyers have tried to "constitutionalize" them.

In the mid-'70s, when Democratic liberals were trying to win support for the Humphrey-Hawkins full employment bill, ACLU members began arguing that economic rights, like full employment, were guaranteed by the Constitution. Not all ACLU members share this view, but activists scored their first significant victory last year when the organization agreed to make the right of the homeless to shelter a constitutional issue.

In the wake of the nuclear freeze movement, ACLU activists tried to make the arms race a constitutional issue. At its national conference in 1983 the ACLU voted to make ending the arms race a civil liberties issue, reasoning that "the character and technology of nuclear weaponry requires an abdication of civil liberties through transforming the war powers from the Congress to the president, through continuing mobilization, through government secrecy, excessive claims of national security and wide-ranging surveillance."

The resolution was rescinded by the national board and then narrowly defeated two years later at the organization's biennial conference. One veteran board member reasoned, "If nuclearism can be attacked as the cause of civil liberties violations, this analysis can be applied endlessly to questions of poverty, environmental protections, etc."

Askin echoed this view, saying, "We have a strong tendency to constitutionalize everything."

Some have argued that all constitutional issues are ultimately political. It is true that the constitutional recognition of new rights, whether those of labor or women or blacks, has occurred because of political movements. But in each era a distinction can nonetheless be made between questions that fall under the Bill of Rights and those that citizens must decide through elections and the legislature. The courts continually make such a distinction, as do ordinary citizens. The peculiar, mixed nature of American democracy—which is intended to prevent majority tyranny—rests on preserving this distinction.

Therefore citizens must be very careful about arguing that a political question is, in fact, a constitutional question. By taking this

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IN THESE TIMES · NOV. 9-15, 1988 · 7

By Doug Turetsky

NEW YORK

AS A NEW RESIDENT PREPARES TO MOVE into the nation's choicest public housing—the White House—a new Congress appears to be on the verge of putting low-income housing legislation back on the national agenda. Several bills introduced into the House during the last session, as well as a new bill promised by a Senate subcommittee early in the next session, signal this shifting mood on Capitol Hill.

During its eight years, the Reagan administration successfully fought to get the federal government out of the housing business. The federal Housing and Urban Development budget was slashed, with congressional acquiescence, from about \$30 billion when

CAPITOL HILL

Reagan took office to \$9 billion today. The net result has been a tremendous explosion in homelessness nationwide, with up to 3 million Americans in need of a home and a shrinking number of newly built or renovated publicly funded apartments for low- and moderate-income families.

As the Reagan administration cut, it promised that the private market would fill the gap in affordable housing. This simply has not happened, and the demand for affordable housing has far outpaced availability. With the cost of housing growing faster than wages, rent swallows more than half the income of approximately 6 million households.

In New York City, for example, the percentage of apartments renting for less than \$300 shrunk by nearly one-half from 1984 to 1987. Over the same period the percentage of units renting for more than \$500 nearly doubled. The city's public housing authority has more than 200,000 families on its waiting list—a wait that runs about 20 to 25 years. Says Robert Hayes, counsel to the Coalition for the Homeless, "It's inconceivable that any president can be as hostile to housing as Reagan...and as far removed from the realities."

Some congressional members are beginning to come to terms with these realities. "After eight years there is a realization that something has to be done at the federal level," says Chester Hartman, a housing policy expert with the Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Policy Studies.

But as Congress prepares for its 101st session, many questions about its commitment remain. Housing requires huge capital expenditures—an unpopular demand in this fiscally tight era. And many congressional members are still more comfortable with programs that promote home ownership than those that attempt to expand the nation's public housing stock. But four bills already introduced in the House may draw enough support to propel Congress forward on the issue.

The House on housing: The Jesse Gray Housing Bill, first introduced in 1987 and sponsored by John Conyers (D-MI), calls for the construction of 500,000 public housing units a year through fiscal year 1997 and the annual renovation of 100,000 existing units. The bill would significantly increase the federal commitment to low-income housing. The Conyers bill would also bring back the standard whereby families pay no more than 25 percent of their incomes for rent in public housing—under Reagan it had been upped to

The new Congress may act on housing issue



Rents swallow more than one-half the income of approximately 6 million American households.

30 percent. The legislation would create a National Housing Trust Fund, financed by taking \$15 billion from the Department of Defense.

More recently, Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) introduced the Affordable Housing Act from the steps of a Washington, D.C., welfare hotel. Co-sponsored by 27 other House members, the act calls for the allocation of \$75 billion over five years to build, rehabilitate and acquire 7.5 million low-income housing units. Unlike many federal programs, where much of the money goes for repaying loans, Frank's act calls for making direct grants toward construction. And the act makes the use of non-profit, community-based developers a priority. The Affordable Housing Act would be funded by raising the alternative minimum tax to 25 percent for both individuals and corporations, taxing the capital gain on inherited capital assets, more than doubling the federal tax on cigarettes and reducing the deduction for business lunches to 50 percent.

California Democrat Rep. Ron Dellums has introduced into the House the National Housing Act, which encourages the conversion of privately owned housing to various forms of social ownership. Like the Frank proposal, this bill would authorize funds for construc-

tion and renovation of existing public housing by local non-profit developers through direct capital grants. These grants would be complemented by operating subsidies that would guarantee affordability to any tenant. Funding for Dellums' act would come primarily from general revenues.

Housing activists acknowledge that it is highly unlikely that any bill calling for large expenditures for low-income housing will be passed any time soon. But even the introduction of these bills shows a marked change in congressional attitudes toward the need for low-income housing. "Both Frank's bill and Dellums' have really upped the ante," says Hartman. He believes that having these proposals on the legislative table may push the House subcommittee on housing to forge a more sweeping bill than it would have otherwise considered.

A fourth initiative, the Community Housing Partnership Act sponsored by Massachusetts Democrat Rep. Joseph Kennedy II, is far more modest in scope and cost, but for just that reason may have the best chance of passage. The Kennedy Act calls for \$500 million in annual grants to non-profit developers of permanently affordable rental and owner-occupied housing.

Senate action: No comprehensive housing bill has been introduced in the Senate, but legislative activity is underway. Based on several recommendations of the National Housing Task Force it impaneled, the Senate housing subcommittee is preparing legislation to be introduced in the next session of Congress. The current proposal by the subcommittee, which is led by Sen. Alan Cranston (D-CA) and Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY), seeks to create a new housing finance organization, reorganize some existing rent-subsidy programs, and allow potential homeowners to use their Individual Retirement Accounts for down payments. But the legislative proposal, known as the National Affordable Housing Act, fails to make any specific funding commitments—a major shortcoming in the eyes of Hartman and other housing experts.

Still, housing activists like Barry Zigas of the National Low Income Housing Coalition find it a positive sign just to see Congress moving back into play on housing. Looking ahead to when Congress members jockey for support of their initiatives, Zigas says, "The story is that there's a horse race at all. People are coming back to the track."

But none of the current bills aims directly at one of the most critical issues facing the nation's low-income housing stock—expiring federal subsidies and use restrictions on privately owned projects built with federal

The Reagan legacy of disinvestment from production of low-income housing will remain for years.

funding. According to a report prepared by Phillip Clay for the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, some 900,000 low-income apartments could be lost by 1995 as owners opt out of federal programs. In 1987 Congress sidestepped directly dealing with this potential catastrophe, adopting a two-year moratorium on the early repayment of mortgages that would allow many owners to convert their projects to market-rate apartments. Housing experts say further congressional action is needed soon.

No matter how soon the Congress acts, the Reagan legacy of disinvestment from the production of low-income housing will remain for years. Turning the federal funding pipeline on and off is a process that takes time. Only in the last few years has the housing market really begun to feel the effects of the Reagan cutbacks, as projects first authorized during the Carter administration were completed and virtually no new developments were started.

The same process also works in reverse. The federal pipeline will not begin to flow as soon as a new spending bill is passed. It takes time to turn a legislative program into a bureaucratic reality. Victor Bach, director of housing research at the Community Service Society of New York, says it would take "three to four years before anything can be delivered in the ground."

Even as a new Congress seems set to shake itself from Capitol Hill's lethargic acceptance of the Reagan housing cuts, the number of families needing housing assistance continues to grow. The affordable housing crisis is sure to be around for years to come. □

Doug Turetsky is editor of *City Limits*, a New York City alternative monthly.

By Diana Johnstone

WEST GERMAN CHANCELLOR HELMUT Kohl's trip to Moscow last month was billed as the official opening of a "new era" in German-Soviet relations. The trip "broke the ice" between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov and the Christian Democrat from Bonn, spokesmen said.

Nobody was fooled that Kohl deserved credit for what was happening. His arrival in Moscow was the sign that even the slowest laggard had caught up with the trend.

Kohl's ill-chosen words two years ago likening Gorbachov to Hitler's propaganda chief, Joseph Goebbels, cast a chill over West German relations with Moscow. Like a blundering whale caught in the ice, Kohl was slowly extracted from his awkward predicament by Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, with behind-the-scenes help from members of the opposition Social Democratic Party (SPD) and visiting businessmen.

Kohl went to Moscow with a large delegation of bankers and businessmen who are probably more important than he is. Some consider the Soviet Union West Germany's most important future market. But business is slow so far. Gorbachov has been avoiding a spending spree that could perhaps bring quick popularity by offering the population Western consumer goods. It's not just that he wants to avoid getting the USSR in debt. It's also that he wants the rewards to come from *perestroika*, from learning how to work better.

The three billion Deutsche mark credit line opened by a consortium of West German banks will go mainly for modernization of food processing and other consumer goods production. Germans will train Soviet managers. Gorbachov wants to improve the quality of products and get away from the pattern of exchanging Soviet raw materials for Western industrial goods.

Since the Chernobyl accident the Russians have turned to the Germans for nuclear safety technology. A joint commission of safety experts will compare security features on Soviet and West Germany reactors.

The industrial giant Siemens will help build a high-temperature nuclear reactor on Russia's Volga River. The billion-dollar contract was the German nuclear industry's first foreign sale in 10 years. The project was immediately attacked as unsafe by West German ecologists, which can help explain why Siemens wants to build it so far away.

Not far enough, perhaps, to avoid controversy: West Germany is also exporting its environmental movements eastward. Last year a subgroup of the Soviet peace movement was formed that calls itself "Green Peace." And this month a Greenpeace delegation from Hamburg went to Moscow to discuss a joint environmental education program for Russian and German children. Greenpeace is planning to open an office in the Soviet Union.

This is a big change from the recent past, when the Soviets branded Greenpeace a CIA front and fought its activists protests against Soviet whaling. Soviet ecologists are already talking about the need for a "green international."

Gorbachov seems to sympathize with that view. When Brazilian President Jose Sarney was in Moscow recently Gorbachov told him that the whole world was concerned about



West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's talk of German reunification may be for naught.

Soviets' warming trend with Western Europe

saving the Amazon rain forest.

"Nice boys": The Germans who traveled to Moscow included Defense Minister Rupert Scholz, who agreed with Soviet Defense Minister Dimitri Yazov on conventional disarmament prospects, and the Christian Democratic right-wing leader Alfred Dreg-

DIPLOMACY

ger, one of the last defenders of the Germans' World War II fight against "Bolshevism." Dregger inspected Soviet soldiers, found them to be "nice boys," and announced that "only we conservatives" could have broken the ice so effectively, and not the Social Democratic Party "because of its credibility problems." It is true that adversaries of detente in the West have tried to isolate the SPD, the pioneer of *Ostpolitik*. This is no longer possible.

Mikhail Gorbachov is not only twice as popular as Ronald Reagan in West Germany, but is also more popular than Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Most West Germans believe Moscow wants disarmament.

Mikhail Gorbachov is not only twice as popular as Ronald Reagan in West Germany, but is also more popular than Chancellor Kohl. A poll published on the eve of the trip showed that only 19 percent of West Germans feel militarily threatened by the Soviet Union, compared to 80 percent who do not. Two out of three are convinced that Moscow wants disarmament and 71 percent favor reducing arms expenditures.

An earlier poll showed that the number of West Germans in favor of "continuing to stand closely by the U.S." has dropped by 56 percent in 1980 to 32 percent, while those in favor of a policy of neutralism between East and West have risen from 31 percent to 44 percent.

Kohl's blunt, blundering ways may make him the right man for this delicate moment in history. The Western allies, in between tear-smudged declarations of sympathy for the German people's natural desire to be together in a single nation, watch like suspicious hawks for signs that Germans might be trying to make it happen. Nothing appalls them more than the prospect of a German reunification resulting from a friendly accord between the Germans and the Russians. The traditional geopolitics of the Atlantic states has been directed at preventing rapprochement between the land powers, Russia and Germany.

Konrad Adenauer, West German chancellor from 1949 to 1963, was the darling of the West because he willingly abandoned any real prospect of a unified Germany in favor

of inserting the Federal Republic into a Western military alliance directed against the Soviet Union. The talk of "rollback" was mere bluster. In fact it sharpened East-West divisions by alarming the Soviet Union into a more rigid defense posture.

Kohl is a political heir to Adenauer. The more he talks about reunification, the less it is likely to happen. He is not the man to make some clever deal.

During his banquet speech at the Kremlin, Kohl deplored the division of Germany as "unnatural" and demanded that detente "should allow the Germans to overcome the division of their country by peaceful means." The unity of the German people "is a historic and human reality that politics cannot overlook," he declared. This recast a momentary chill.

Gorbachov reminded his guest that "the present situation is the fruit of history." Gorbachov's clear "no" to reunification was a relief to West Europeans who count on Moscow to keep Germany within bounds, but don't dare say so.

The recent promotion of former Soviet Ambassador to Bonn Valentin Falin to head of the Central Committee's international department is a sign that the Soviet leadership grants a key role to Soviet-German relations in East-West rapprochement. Falin succeeds former Ambassador to Washington Anatoly Dobrynin, who is retiring. Germany's importance to Moscow is not merely a matter of trade. Above all, it involves sharing influence in an Eastern Europe that in the coming years will evolve in unpredictable ways.

Moscow's main priority is to avoid reverting to the pre-World War II situation when Western powers fished in East Europe's troubled waters in order to weaken and attack the Soviet Union.

The prospect of such a peaceful understanding alarms Atlantic-rim powers who have traditionally built their own influence in Eastern Europe on anti-Russian and anti-German sentiments. With the Social Democratic inventors of *Ostpolitik* presently out of office, its adversaries have focused their suspicions on liberal Foreign Minister Genscher. He has recommended that the West "take Gorbachov at his word" and "use the historic opportunity inherent in the Soviet Union's new thinking."

Continued on following page

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Genscher has been working hard to facilitate conventional arms reduction talks that could remove any justification for the pending NATO modernization of short-range nuclear missiles. His suggestions have been taken up by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. The two get along famously. Soviet leaders promise that Bonn's influence will grow as East-West relations become demilitarized.

A "hearty mutual antipathy": Genscher has apparently made some headway in convincing French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas and President François Mitterrand that it would make sense to hold up development of the short-range "Hades" nuclear missile to see what disarmament deal can be made with the Soviet Union. This has naturally put the French military-industrial complex on his back, along with the American arms addicts.

No wonder there is a "hearty mutual antipathy," according to the West German news-weekly *Der Spiegel*, between Genscher and U.S. Ambassador Richard Burt, an ardent champion of missile modernization. Burt says Genscher is "slippery."

Genscher is all the more exasperating to his adversaries in that, after 14 years as foreign minister, he enjoys solid support at home. Month after month, year after year he tops public opinion polls as West Germany's most popular political figure.

Media prejudiced toward "Western diplomatic sources" have spread innuendo about Genscher. In late September the influential French daily *Le Monde* asked pointedly: "What is Mr. Genscher's true nature...? Does he nourish unmentionable intentions as eternal champion of *Ostpolitik*?"

Le Monde said Genscher's diplomacy was based on "a few simple ideas," starting with the "typically Germanic" notion—which dis-

mays the French—that "if people keep talking even the sharpest conflict can be worked out." The French were also annoyed by Genscher's working assumption "that Germany was at the origin of Europe's misfortunes and that its first duty today is to help out." Nothing so arouses French suspicions as apparent good intentions.

The Germans do not, however, mean to "abandon the West," but rather to take the West with them. In some cases, this is easy. The Italians are second to nobody in enthusiasm for Gorbachov and in closing business deals. Kohl was preceded in Moscow by Italian Prime Minister Ciriaco De Mita, who arrived surrounded by generous Italian bankers. And little Belgium did them all a favor at the recent NATO nuclear planning meeting by holding up any decision to modernize short-range nuclear weapons.

An isolated France? France is more recalcitrant. But Mitterrand and Dumas seem

aware that it is France that risks isolation by opposing détente and disarmament. Mitterrand's spokesmen counter domestic charges of letting themselves be "towed by the Germans" by saying that the best way to keep German *Ostpolitik* under control is to go along and "envelop" it.

France has little practical alternative but to go along with West Germany. Mitterrand's original hope for a partnership of "nuclear powers" with Britain has been dashed by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's unyielding devotion to her "special relationship" with Reagan and atavistic hostility to continental Europe.

German Social Democrats have been privately reassuring French Socialists that their fears of *Ostpolitik* have been groundless. "We Social Democrats are sure that with our policy of détente we have done more for human rights in Eastern Europe than all the Cold Warriors," Horst Ehmke, the Social Democrats' foreign policy spokesman, recently told foreign policy specialists in Paris. He said that Franco-German cooperation must not be reduced to symbolic military projects. It should be primarily political.

A new era is at hand, according to Ehmke, that will be marked by the end of Soviet-American tutelage. "Are we in Europe, in Germany and France, politically prepared for such a new era? The honest answer is 'no,'" he said. He advised the French to overcome their military obsessions and stop regarding Gorbachov as "more dangerous than a Soviet arms buildup."

Ehmke said he was "outraged" that after all these years there was a Soviet leader "who is saying what for years we in the West wanted a Soviet leader to say, and we are afraid."

A concrete step toward diplomatic cooperation was decided last summer by Dumas and Genscher. In an unprecedented experiment, the two countries are planning to establish a joint Franco-German embassy in Mongolia, with an integrated staff and alternative French and German ambassadors. The pattern could be extended to other countries, and overcome the chronic French suspicion that the Germans are secretly planning to abandon the West for the East.

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By Joe Lockard

JERUSALEM

THIS WAS THE MESSAGE OF ISRAEL'S NOVEMBER 1 election: the right is taking charge here. As *In These Times* went to press, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was beginning to assemble a new government coalition composed of patriots, territorial maximalists, ultraconservative religious parties and advocates of mass Arab expulsion.

Contrary to expectations, the election results did not strengthen the two major parties, Likud and Labor. Each lost some of their seats in the Knesset, Israel's parliament. Likud now has 39 seats to Labor's 38. Still, due to better coalition-building possibilities among the Knesset's 120 seats, the right-wing Likud is in the commanding position.

The religious parties captured a historic high of 18 Knesset seats. This bloc's ultraorthodox parties now control 13 of the 18 seats. Little concerned with peace and security issues, they focus instead on such issues as Friday night movies and Sabbath legislation, sanctions against the Reform and Conservative Jewish movements and increased religious content in secular school curricula.

The effects of this religious ascendancy in the Knesset are expected quickly: bacon-eating, for example, will likely be banned. Standing in his butcher shop in Jerusalem, Moshe Kranzendorf told *In These Times*, "There are 250 shops in the country that sell pork, like this one, plus the *kibbutzim* that supply us. First thing, the anti-pork law will go through and they'll shut us down. The people of Israel are going crazy.... Don't they have anything better to do?"

Any coalition with the ultraorthodox parties would also result in multimillion-dollar government subsidies to their affiliated *yeshivas*, or religious schools. This post-election "payola" has galloped Israel's secular public for many years.

The ultranationalist parties won seven seats, which only slightly improved their Knesset representation. As ready partners in a Likud-led coalition, however, they will have a much-enhanced ability to lead and obtain government financing for a new settlement drive in the Occupied Territories.

The election results point out Labor's need for internal rehabilitation. Labor's decline is due in part to its continued unpopularity among new, younger voters and the aging of its traditional constituencies. It has become a quiescent, middle-class party that captures a major portion of its votes simply because moderate voters reject the Likud alternative.

Leftist parties such as the Citizens Rights Movement (CRM) and Mapam (United Workers) profited from disillusionment with the Labor Party. The liberal CRM gained five seats, up from the two seats it had won in the 1984 election. Mapam, which split from Labor after a 23-year partnership, firmly re-established itself as a socialist alternative party by capturing three seats.

Peace front absent: Nearly 80 percent of Israel's eligible voters went to the polls. Yet observers here suggested that voters turned out in such high numbers more in spite of the campaign than because of it.

The campaign revealed almost no new ideas about Israel's growing confrontation with Palestinian nationalism (see *In These Times*, Oct. 26). The Labor Party's main proposal called for three to six months of absolute quiet in the Occupied Territories. This would be followed by elections to choose

Right gains in Israeli vote



Palestinian representatives to a peace-talks delegation.

The proposal appeared to be aimed at undecided centrist voters, because the plan is patently unacceptable to Palestinians. Palestinians have been far too radicalized by the year-long *intifada*, or uprising, to view local elections as anything more than a meaning-

MIDEAST

less exercise supervised and controlled by the military occupation authorities.

Labor's election scheme provided the Likud with a campaign springboard. During the campaign Likud Prime Minister Shamir repeatedly and vociferously denounced the Labor Party for its readiness to entertain the notion of negotiations with the Palestinians, even within the framework of a carefully staged international conference.

Election-time violence: Since the early '50s, physical and rhetorical violence have been historical partners in Israeli elections. "Begin, Begin!" remains the menacing mantra of the Likud faithful, even though Menachem Begin stepped down as prime minister five years ago.

This year's campaign saw its full quota of violence. As they traveled around the country, Labor's Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin were stoned and targeted by vegetable-throwers. Shamir responded to the stoning of his opponents with the taunt, "What does labor want—love?"

Labor Knesset candidates endured constant screams and insults during their campaign events. It spilled over into private life: *In These Times* witnessed Labor's economic coordination minister, Gad Yaacobi, sitting at an outdoor cafe surrounded by a crowd screaming "Traitor, murderer!"

Labor candidates were not the only targets of Likud threats, of course. There were also the Palestinians. In one campaign appearance Shamir took a genocidal page from the Book of Joshua and promised a cheering crowd that if Palestinians in the Occupied Territories used weapons to resist the Israeli army, "not a single Arab will be left alive."

Labor Defense Minister Rabin entered the rhetorical competition with a campaign speech threatening, "If the Arabs do not keep the quiet, they will find themselves standing on scorched earth."

Arab violence continued uninterrupted despite Rabin's promise. Two days before the elections an Israeli mother and her three children burned to death when Molotov

cocktails hit their bus as it traveled through Jericho.

The attack triggered a xenophobic backlash against Labor as Likud turned the tragedy into a campaign issue. Labor Secretary-General Uzi Baram estimated that the Jericho bombing cost his party five or six Knesset seats, along with its status as the country's largest party.

On the same day as the bus attack two Palestinian youths were killed and another 20 were wounded by army gunfire, events that drew negligible attention and lost no one any votes.

Racist votes redistributed: Two weeks before the election the High Court of Justice ruled Meir Kahane and his Kach (Thus) party could not participate in the election. The court cited Kach's clear racism against Arabs, rejected its Talmudic arguments for Jewish separatism and indirectly compared Kach's philosophy to Nazism.

Likud leader Shamir welcomed the decision against Kach and, less publicly, so did his campaign staff. An estimated one-half of the would-be Kahane voters returned to the Likud fold, providing Likud with an extra one or two Knesset seats. The remainder of Kach's votes went to the other ultranationalist and religious parties.

Many Likud supporters were sympathetic to Kach's plight. "It's a pity they threw out poor Kahane," said Benny Mizrahi, a vocal Likud supporter in Jerusalem's Kurdish

quarter. "Imagine kicking out a rabbi and still letting the communists and the PLOniks participate!"

Kach's current strategy is to transform itself into a militant extraparlimentary vanguard that will continue to spearhead Jewish confrontation with the Arabs. But the election results appear to have made Kach redundant. The Homeland Party, headed by reserve Gen. "Gandhi" Zeevi, gained two Knesset seats. It has incorporated Kach's notion of mass Palestinian expulsions.

The real test: In the coming weeks Israel promises to enter a period of political confusion. Negotiations to form a new government may be in progress as the Palestine National Council considers declaring a government-in-exile and begins to push for its diplomatic recognition (see accompanying story).

Right-wing Israeli groups are preparing a fresh settlement push. One such group has readied a postelection plan to establish 53 new West Bank and Gaza settlements, 19 of which were approved by the outgoing government.

Nearly four-fifths of Israel's voters are almost evenly divided between the two large parties, Likud and Labor. This split into two relatively constant camps duplicates the 1984 election results and appears to signal a long-term deadlock. Given its current reluctance to cut any political deal with the non-Zionist left, Labor has very little chance of escaping this stalemate.

For Israel's left, the era of non-violent confrontation politics in the Occupied Territories ended well before the *intifada* began. Peace Now, the group that turned out 25,000 demonstrators in 1983 to protest the occupation of Lebanon, has sponsored no such protests over the *intifada*.

The election results confirmed the left's role as a witness, not a player, in shaping the Israeli-Palestinian relationship. The chances of a reversal of current trends depend greatly on Labor's behavior in opposition and whether anti-occupation sentiment will rise high enough to change Labor's message and the Peres-Rabin leadership.

The real test of the November 1 election results was how far they advanced Israelis and Palestinians toward the negotiation table and a peace settlement.

Israel flunked. Now it's the Palestinians' turn.

Joe Lockard is a Jerusalem-based writer.

Next move is up to Palestinian leadership

With the Israeli election out of the way, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) now faces key decisions of its own.

The Palestine National Council (PNC), the most important legislative authority within the PLO, gathers in Algiers on November 12. Observers say the PNC may face an important vote on the future of the Occupied Territories.

PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat, recently told Arab journalists that he may ask the council to decide on one of four options for the Israeli-controlled Occupied Territories.

• Ask for international supervision of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

• Pass a "proclamation of independence" that would mark PLO recognition of Palestinian statehood within the Occupied Territories.

• In addition to the proclamation, establish a provisional government that would attempt to establish some sort of administrative authority within the Occupied Territories and would seek international recognition.

• Establish a provisional government without a proclamation of independence.

According to Ghassan Bishara, Washington correspondent for the Palestinian newspaper *Al-Fajr*, the proclamation, or the establishment of a provisional government, would likely be based on PLO recognition of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181. Because that 1947 resolution calls for side-by-side Israeli and Palestinian states, says Bishara, such a move would mean an official and explicit PLO recognition of Israel's right to exist.

—Miles Harvey

GUATEMALA'S

civil war
winds down
—for now.



Ixil Indian Elena Cobo Gomez (left) sits with another recaptured female guerrilla in a Nebaj military compound.

By Jack Epstein

NEBAJ, GUATEMALA

IT WAS A DAY LIKE ANY OTHER DAY AT THE office for Guatemalan guerrilla Elena Cobo Gomez—until the army showed up.

In August the 20-year-old information officer for the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) was attempting to recruit peasants when she was suddenly apprehended by government troops. She was taken to a military compound in this small highland town for "re-education." "They [army officers] tell me that I must change my ideas," she told *In These Times*.

Several years ago captured rebels like Cobo—an Ixil Indian who, along with thousands of other Indians, joined the guerrillas' ranks—were routinely tortured or executed. But the two-year-old civilian government of President Vinicio Cerezo wants to win over the populace's hearts and minds.

Under his influence the military has increased its discipline, installed more likable officers in war zones and doubled its efforts to woo peasants from rebel strongholds. Instead of bombs, planes drop leaflets promising food, clothing, shelter and even money for surrendered weapons.

Thousands of peasants have accepted Cerezo's offer and are returning from the mountains, according to diplomats, civilian aid work-

ers and government officials in the area. Disillusioned by 27 years of war and unfulfilled rebel promises of a better life, 10,000 of the 13,000 who lived with the guerrillas have been coaxed back, Cerezo claims. The Guatemalan leader also says that 4,500 guerrillas have asked for amnesty, leaving only 700 nationwide. Diplomatic sources, however, put the number at almost twice that many.

Without a doubt, Central America's longest civil war is winding down. "The situation is controlled," said Col. Arturo Isaacs, a Ministry of Defense spokesman. "There is transit on all highways and there are now only isolated incidents."

Cerezo in trouble? Despite these inroads, interviews with politicians, diplomats and local journalists indicate that Cerezo is under constant pressure from a right-wing clique of army officers and wealthy businessmen who vehemently oppose his handling of the war. These same observers claim that the president's power base is slowly being eroded in order to bring back the iron-fist war policy of previous military governments.

"All the progress made under Cerezo could be wiped out in a day," said an American businessman who once lived in a guerrilla zone near scenic Lake Atitlan and requested anonymity.

According to a prominent opposition politician, Cerezo's adversaries are extremely angered by his insistence on negotiating a settlement with the three main guerrilla factions. They are proud that the army beat back the guerrillas without the massive U.S. aid that El Salvador's army has needed and believe they are close to a military victory.

Cerezo is only the third democratically elected president in this century to govern the Ohio-sized nation of 8.6 million. The 45-year-old lawyer assumed the presidency in 1986 after 32 years of military-dominated governments. In the face of economic collapse and a tarnished human-rights image, the generals had little choice but to allow his election.

Prior to his landslide victory, Cerezo was one of the military's most prominent critics and the nation's most popular politician. A member of the Christian Democrat Party, his vocal attacks against the army and its brutal counterinsurgency methods forced him to spend five years in virtual seclusion, moving from safe house to safe house with an entourage of bodyguards. Although 300 of his party colleagues were murdered, he survived three assassination attempts. He reportedly wears a gun and a bulletproof vest and has a black belt in karate.

His critics want a return to the scorched-earth policy practiced in the late '60s and again be-

tween 1978-84. In an effort to deny the rebels a base of support, hundreds of villages were destroyed and thousands of peasants were killed or forced to seek refuge either in the mountains or in squalid refugee camps in Mexico. In the cities, death squads directed by senior government officials kidnapped and killed politicians, students, professors and union leaders, dumping their mutilated bodies along highways.

The conflict began in 1961 when a group of Guatemala City university students took to the hills to wage war against the political and economic dominance of a few wealthy landowners and military officers. Over the years these powerful individuals had toppled and created governments to protect their interests. At the same time, their unwillingness to allow social change had transformed the country into Latin America's most unequal structure of land ownership and income distribution. Seventy percent of the land was owned by 2 percent of the population, and thousands of peasants were tied to large plantations by a feudalistic debt-labor system.

In 1952 President Jacobo Arbenz dared to embark on a land redistribution program by expropriating 387,000 acres of uncultivated land from the U.S.-owned United Fruit Company, then the largest property owner in the

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The Independent Executive Secretariat

By Sarah James
And Tim Frasca
Washington, D.C.

According to this interpretation, the leaks are seen as warnings to Park to change his policies and to stop trying to

Table 1. List of 20 respondents

Government sources, corroborated by Korean sources quoted in the *New York Times*, report that Park met in Dec. 1971 with Korean President Park Chung Hee. Col. Pak Ho Hi of the Korean Cultural and Freedom Foundation—also chief adviser and translator for the Rev. Sun

Continued on page 14



Chiang Ching and Chairman Mao: she was the most hated and he was the most
loved person in China. Page 11

Albert Maltz on a popular front
Blacklisted Hollywood writer reviews Woody Allen 17



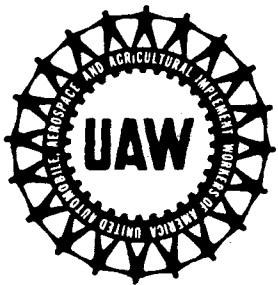
Ron Dellums: "I think democratic socialism will prevail in this country because it makes an enormous amount of sense." Page 6. *These Times Photo by David Greenfield*



Ronald Reagan and Robert Taylor "My dear fellow Communists, we are just getting started." *Washington Post*, Feb. 2, 1952. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1952/02/02/page-A1/>. Page 17.

But in the past two years, our criticisms of the Reagan policies have been validated, and we have once again begun to grow rapidly. This year the number of our paid subscribers increased by more than 10,000. We will enter 1989 with a circulation of 35,000 and with expectations of growing as rapidly next year. In large part this growth has been made possible by our longtime supporters. As in the past, this anniversary issue reflects that support in the greetings on the following pages. We are deeply grateful to those of you represented here, and to the thousands of others who have kept us going since 1976.

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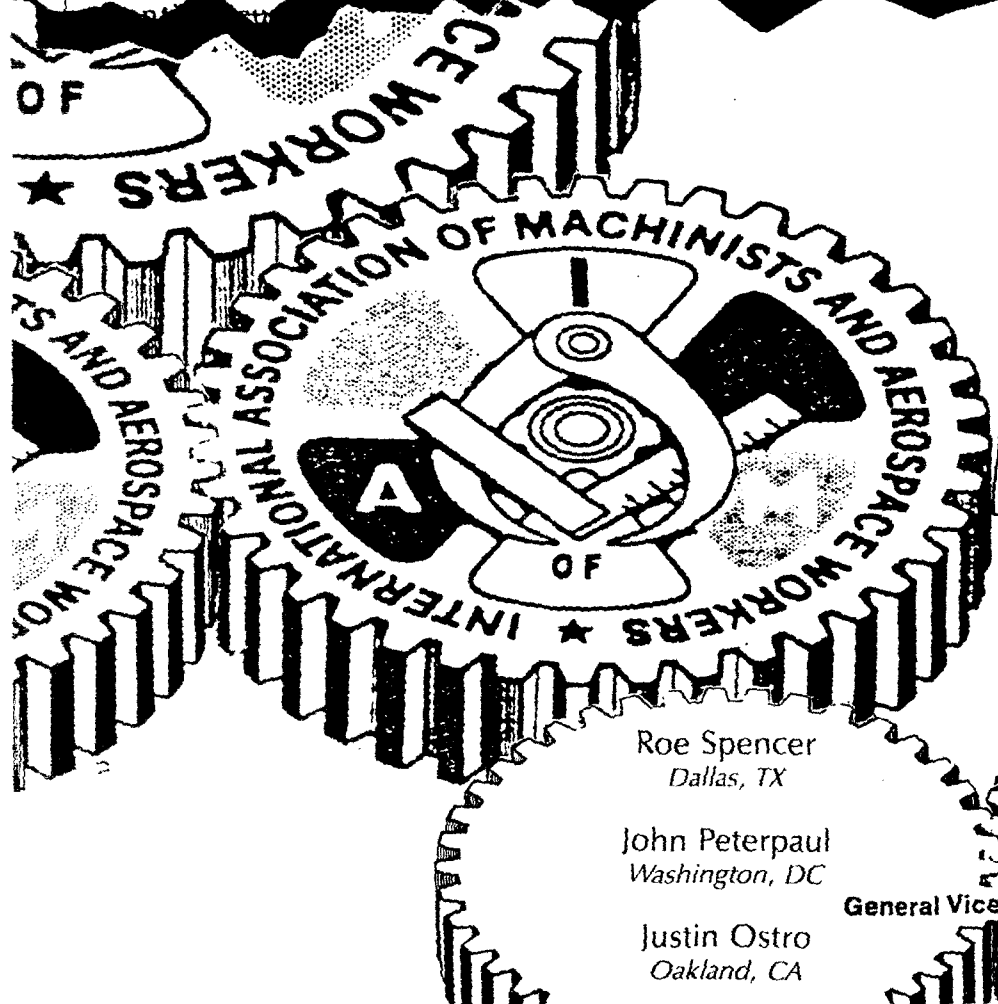
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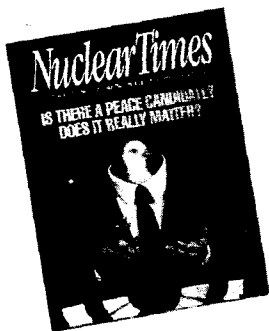
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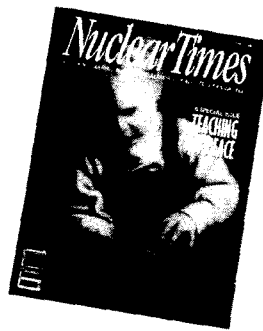
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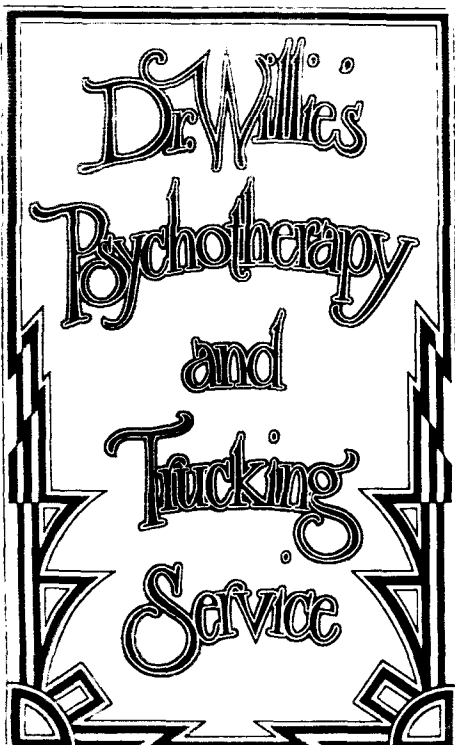
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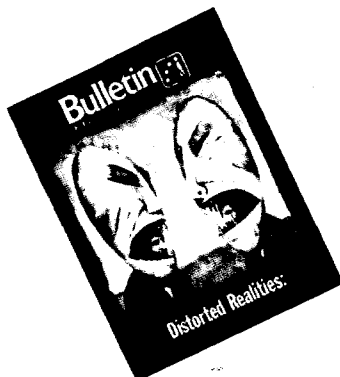
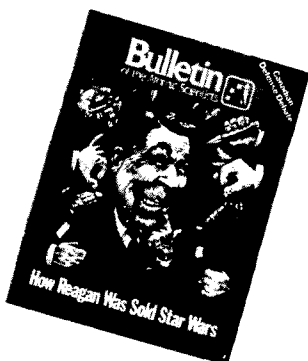
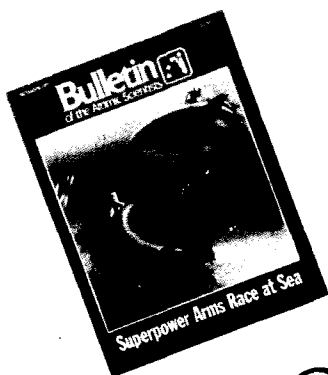
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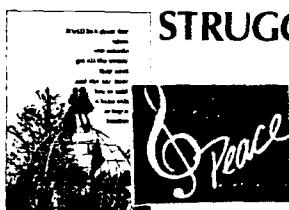
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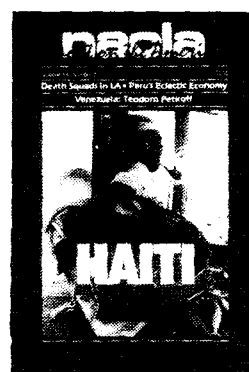
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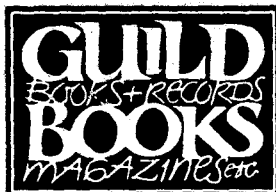


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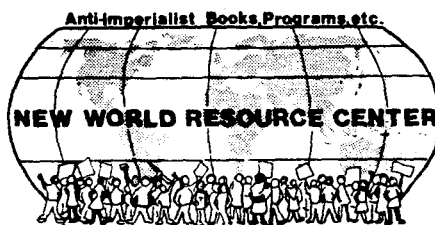


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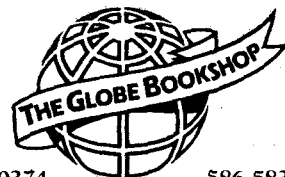
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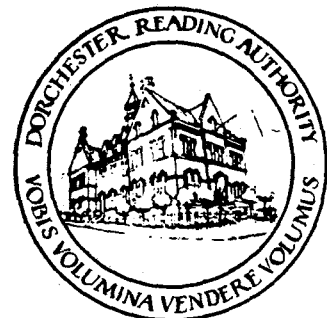


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Priest tells peasants: This is your land

country. Disgruntled officers and nervous landowners met with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and launched "Operation Success," the code name of the 1954 CIA plot to overthrow Arbenz. Arbenz was sent off to exile in Mexico, where in 1971 he mysteriously drowned in his bathtub.

Until Cerezo's electoral victory, every president since Arbenz had been a military officer, except for Julio Cesar Mendez Montenegro, who served from 1966 to 1970. A university professor, he exercised few powers and army commanders were given a free hand in dealing with the guerrillas.

Mendez appointed a tough colonel named Carlos Arana Osorio to lead the anti-guerrilla campaign. Nicknamed the "Jackel of the East" by the guerrillas, Osorio killed thousands of peasants and defeated the insurgents in just two years. But in the late '70s the guerrillas reappeared stronger than ever with thousands of newly recruited Indians. At their height they managed to attract an estimated 6,000 fighters and 250,000 unarmed civilian collaborators, according to army spokesman Isaacs.

The military reacted to the rebel buildup with such ferocity that then-President Jimmy Carter insisted that future U.S. military aid be tied to improvement in human rights. His policy was an abrupt change from previous years, when the U.S. committed vast resources, including Green Beret advisers, to the counterinsurgency program. (Guatemala has been an important country for U.S. interests. Currently, more than 200 American firms operate here and the U.S. annually gives Guatemala more than \$150 million in economic and military aid.)

Outraged by Carter's move, Guatemalan army leaders refused to accept his terms. Subsequently, "no other country in the hemisphere endured such sustained and pervasive political violence during the past two decades," said a 1987 Americas Watch report. In that time, there have been an estimated 200,000 deaths, 40,000 disappearances, 80,000 orphans and 1 million displaced.

Despite the carnage and 27 years of war, Guatemala still has Latin America's most skewed distribution of wealth. A 1982 U.S. Agency for International Development report found that 1 percent of landowners still own 35 percent of the nation's farmlands. A 1984 study showed that the wealthiest 20 percent received 57 percent of the income, while the poorest 20 percent received 5 percent.

Moreover, 79 percent of all Guatemalans live in poverty, the average life span in rural areas is 49 years, more than half the population earns less than \$150 annually and the nation's infant mortality rate trails only Haiti's in the hemisphere with 79 deaths per 1,000 live births, according to the Latin American Economic Planning Council. Most of the poor are Indians who are descended from the Mayas and speak one of 23 languages and comprise more than half the population.

Uneasy peace: The Ixils of Quiche province are some of the poorest people in the nation, and many took up arms with the hope

Continued on page 22

NUEVA CONCEPCIÓN, GUATEMALA—In a country where even sympathy for agrarian reform has prompted unexpected visits from right-wing death squads, Father Andrés Girón continues to tempt fate.

The 42-year-old Roman Catholic priest, who heads this nation's first agrarian peasant movement in 26 years, rails in weekly sermons against Guatemala's skewed land system, refers to wealthy landowners as "vultures" and encourages peasants to demand a better life. "Only then can you change the future of this country," he recently told his parishioners at a Sunday Mass.

His outspokenness has caused the U.S.-educated churchman to receive regular death threats, and to lose five family members and several advisers to unknown gunmen and a seminary building to arson. Yet he remains undeterred.

"Any time you speak about injustice in this country, you risk your life," he told a group of visiting foreign reporters. "But I don't want to go down in history as a priest who did nothing for his people."

In 1986 Girón founded the National Pro-Land Peasants Association (AMC) at his parish in Nueva Concepción, a small rural town with a disproportionate number of shoeless children, Protestant sect churches, drugstores and funeral parlors. He claims to have nearly 200,000 members.

A former schoolteacher with a flair for dramatic effect, Girón is no stranger to political activity. During the '60s he worked in Tennessee with Martin Luther King Jr. and has adopted many of the civil rights leader's non-violent tactics, including petition drives, hunger strikes and marches.

Two months after Girón founded the AMC, he led 16,000 peasants on a four-day, 90-mile march to Guatemala City to pressure the new civilian government of President Vinicio Cerezo to purchase unused acreage for landless farmers. Cerezo met with Girón and promised to distribute state-owned lands during the next year to 70,000 peasant families.

A "moderate reform": Nueva Concepción lies on Guatemala's sweltering southern coast, home to some of the largest banana and sugarcane plantations in the Americas. The region was once the heart of United Fruit Company operations (it left the country in 1972) and was targeted in 1952 by President Jacobo Arbenz for the nation's first and only land-reform program. Arbenz delivered 1.5 million acres, including 387,000 acres of uncultivated United Fruit Company property, to some 100,000 peasant families.

For Arbenz' efforts, the former army colonel was dubbed a "communist" by conservative landowners and military officers who joined forces in 1954 with the CIA to topple his government. Ironically, a 1982 report by the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) described Arbenz' land program as a "moderate, progressive reform" whose "basic thrust was to redistribute idle lands held in large private estates and government-owned state farms."

After Arbenz' ouster, all expropriated properties were returned to their original owners, and every government since has steered clear of the land issue and the wrath of the powerful civilians and army officers who own the largest plantations. Guatemala's economy is based primarily on agri-



Father Andrés Girón is leading Guatemala's first agrarian peasant movement in 26 years.

culture, and coffee, cotton, sugar and banana plantations account for most of the country's foreign trade. "Any president who pushes land reform won't be running a government very long," said Congressman Edmond Mulet of the opposition National Centralist Union Party.

Many Guatemala experts agree that unequal distribution of land is the main cause of the 27-year-old civil war. Over the years guerrilla groups have attracted thousands of landless Indian peasants—the majority of the nation's poor—by promising to change the nation's inequitable land system.

Landownership in Guatemala is more unequal than anywhere else in Latin America. According to the same AID report, 78 percent of all landholdings are under nine acres but represent 10 percent of the nation's farms. Holdings of more than 1,000 acres, on the other hand, comprise less than one percent of farms but 34 percent of all farmlands. Moreover, while some 2.8 million acres on large plantations remain uncultivated, an estimated 500,000 peasants have no land at all.

Love and hate: Many of Girón's parishioners are highland Indians who work as day laborers on coastal farms for less than \$2 a day. Each year between 300,000 and 500,000 peasants leave their cool mountain homes and travel to the humid coastal lowlands to find work as seasonal laborers. While Girón is a beloved figure to these barefoot, dirt-poor farmers, he is—not surprisingly—reviled in plantation-owner circles.

"What he is offering the peasants is the destruction of the country," said landowner Gustavo Anzueto, a former presidential candidate for a right-wing party who was implicated last May in a failed coup attempt against President Cerezo. "We are an agricultural country. If he had his way and handed out land to peasants, production would stop."

Many wealthy growers have called for Girón's arrest, claiming that he is a dangerous revolutionary who is scaring off investors and destabilizing the country. Recently, Anzueto attempted to reason with the fiery priest by inviting him to meet with a dozen colleagues. The result was not what he had anticipated.

"He gave us hell and called us bloodsuckers," Anzueto recalled.

Girón also remembered the meeting. "Did he tell you that they offered me a lot of money to go to the U.S. to live happily ever after?" he said with a wide grin.

Large landowners also want Girón jailed for threatening to send peasants to "invade"

their uncultivated properties unless the government doles out more land. By late 1987 the Cerezo administration had bought some 10,800 acres of fallow lands and distributed them to 3,000 peasant families. However, Cerezo's modest land program slowed after the nation's powerful right wing threatened to remove him last May in a military coup.

Moreover, the threat of land "invasions" disturbs some politicians who are sympathetic to Girón's movement. They believe he must remain within the law not only to ensure his organization's survival but also his own safety. "He is a constant reminder to the landowners that something has to be done and an easier reminder than the guerrillas," said Mulet. "But if he gets more dangerous, they will kill him."

In recent months Girón has also alienated President Cerezo by becoming one of his fiercest critics. Girón now describes his former ally as a "necessary evil" ("if he falls, everything falls") and accuses him of reneging on a campaign promise to carry out agrarian reform.

He is also angry about a sudden lack of access to the president. "I used to pick up the phone and just call him," he said, referring to the time he openly campaigned for Cerezo. "Now he doesn't even return my calls."

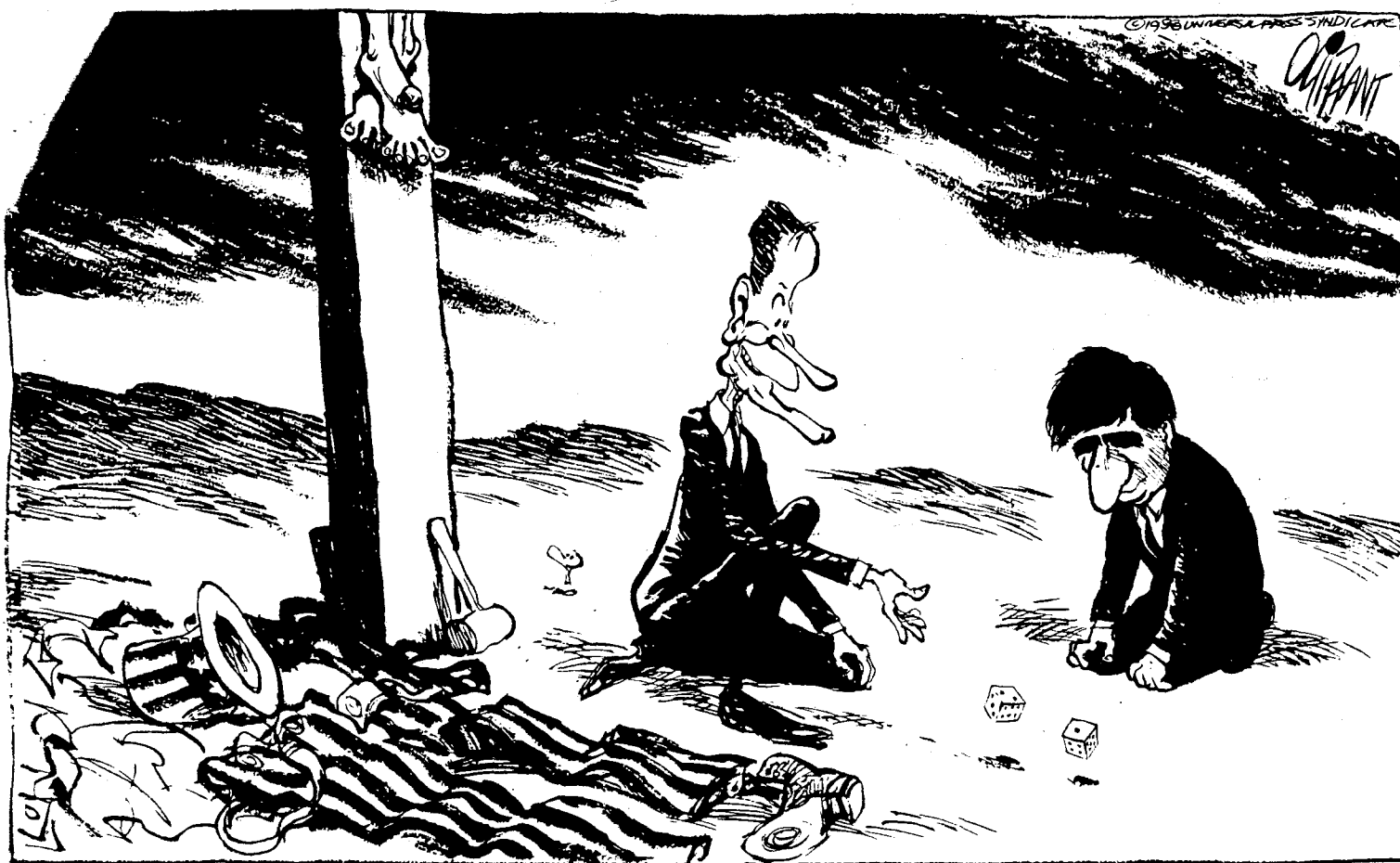
Government officials claim that Cerezo never promised any land reforms. Indeed, the president has been careful to assure the landowners and the military that there will be no such sweeping Arbenz-style reforms under his administration. "What the president promised were programs to bolster existing small farms with irrigation projects, improved market access and an increase in government credits," said presidential spokeswoman Claudia Arenas. "And he has done that."

In the meantime Girón has more than irate landowners and a very cautious Cerezo to worry about. The conservative bishop of nearby Esquintla dislikes his activities and wants to replace him with a Polish priest with more moderate views. Also, critics say Girón's poor business skills may eventually run his peasant organization into the ground.

Yet nobody doubts that his ability to inspire his followers will continue to move them to action.

"An ant is very passive, but if you poke at its anthill, you will see a whole mountain of them come out," said José Angel Reynosa, secretary for the Nueva Concepción chapter of the Popular Socialist Party. "That's what Padre Girón has done." —J.E.

EDITORIAL



Once again, our political system is at an impasse

We at *In These Times* enter our 13th year of publication as we began our first year—on the heels of a presidential election campaign that failed to engage most Americans. Now, after four years of Jimmy Carter and eight years of Ronald Reagan, American politics has even less to do with underlying American realities than it did in 1976. Twelve years ago this week *In These Times* published its first editorial—an analysis of the 1976 election and an enunciation of some of our guiding principles. We publish a slightly abbreviated version of that editorial below. We do so to remind our readers that *In These Times'* reasons for being have not changed—and that we still face “a job whose time has come.”

The election returns are in, but the future of the United States remains in doubt. Almost everyone was dissatisfied with the available choices. Few are delighted with the result.

Yet this campaign was not significantly worse than most presidential contests of recent decades. The difference between this and past elections was not that most voters acted against rather than for a candidate or party. That has been common in this century. Nor were the two major parties less different from each other than before. Their differences were as real and explicit as at any time since the 1930s.

The new element in this election is that more and more people find these differences inadequate to meet the problems facing our society. Voters and non-voters alike know, or sense, that the limits to public discourse set by the major parties prevent shedding old alternatives and defining new ones.

To more and more people it is clear that the political system is at an impasse. It presents us all with little more than dilemmas: choices between equally obnoxious or no longer credible alternatives....

Since World War II Republicans have won the presidency by promising to end wars presided over by Democrats and to bring prosperity with peace. Democrats have captured the White House with promises to end recessions presided over by Republicans and to bring progress through growth. But it is difficult to believe in, no less remember, prosperity without war. And it is no longer believable that simple material growth in the pursuit of private gain signifies progress.

The polls show that people want peace without unemployment, economic insecurity and lost opportunities. They want progressive development, a healthy economy, without war. They want stable prices and full employment, not one at the expense of the other. They want good education and health care, adequate housing and livable communities, honorable work and dignified leisure, without

crushing taxes and bankrupt cities. They want a compassionate society without paternalism and dependence.

They don't want the moon, just modest attainments in what the politicians never tire of telling them is “the best country in the world”—and the richest beyond ancestral dreams. And increasingly they know, or sense, that the system of economics in this country is unable to deliver the standard of living and quality of life they want, and that the system of politics is unwilling to make it do so.

It is true that inflation and unemployment, crime and health care, education and housing, free enterprise and big government, liberty and equality—even Karl Marx and “socialism”—are discussed in election campaigns. But never the underlying reality. Corporate capitalism, this society's system of property, investment, resource- and labor-allocation is a political taboo. And yet, without that discussion all the rest remains abstract, hollow and unconvincing.

Capitalism is the unspoken reality of American politics. That is the one thing the major parties agree upon: praise capitalism (not too often and preferably by another name) but don't discuss it. Preclude serious discussion of the central reality of our times.

This is to be expected. The major parties are the protection agencies of corporate capitalism. They are committed in bipartisan consensus to accommodating government policy and public expectations to the capacities and limits of the system. It is their job to keep corporate-capitalism out of, “above,” politics, just as it was the job of the pre-Civil War Whig and Democratic parties to keep slavery out of politics. They failed then because determined people brought the reality of slave power into the electoral arena, giving birth to the Republican Party.

It remains to be seen whether the Democratic and Republican parties will succeed in keeping corporate power out of electoral politics. If they do they will only be doing their job, and socialists will not be doing theirs.

That job is to bring capitalism into politics as the great issue of our time. This newspaper is committed to beginning the job and to seeing it through. It is a job whose time has come....

A decent respect for the opinions of our readers leads us to declare the basic principles underlying this newspaper:

- Our overriding commitment is to democracy, to socialism as the means to its attainment and to the inseparability of the two in modern industrial society.

- At the heart of our approach is the conviction that diversity is the soul and basis of any democratic socialism. We favor multiparty politics in capitalist America and in a socialist America.

- Finally, we are committed to the principle of civic initiative through freedom of association, conscience, advocacy and travel. We take as fundamental the principle that sovereignty resides with the people, not with the government, the state or the party. Corporate-capitalism has made the sovereignty of the people a dead letter. The socialism deserving our commitment will rejuvenate, honor and practice it.

IN THESE TIMES

“...with liberty and justice for all”

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In These Times believes that to guarantee our life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, Americans must take greater control over our nation's basic economic and foreign policy decisions. We believe in a socialism that fulfills rather than subverts the promise of American democracy, where social needs and rationality, not corporate profit and greed, are the operative principles. Our pages are open to a wide range of views, socialist and non-socialist, liberal and conservative. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

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LETTERS

We didn't mean to elite

IN THESE TIMES' "IN SHORT" COLUMN (OCT. 12) makes great sport of the book title *How to Single Parent*, referring to it as "how not to English" and suggesting that an appropriate follow-up would be *Why Mommy and Daddy Can't Read*.

This kind of snottiness is really uncalled for, especially in a publication that claims to be opposed to elitism. The word "parent" is quite commonly used as a verb, concisely encompassing in a single term a readily understood concept that would otherwise require a longer—and clumsier—explanation.

The sarcasm becomes even more inexplicable when one finds in the same issue an observation by one of your erudite contributors that former Secretary of Education William Bennett's remarks have "won...much media attention and have enabled him to foreground himself among conservatives [emphasis added]." Presumably, such usage is acceptable only when it comes from a program director at Wellesley.

Perhaps this seems a rather trivial complaint. However, I think that this kind of petty sneering on *In These Times*' part is one reason that socialist-oriented publications have so little appeal to a mass audience.

William Tucker
Camden, N.J.

Switching channels

ITHINK YOU DID THE MEMORY OF PAUL LYNDE A disservice by comparing him to George Bush (*ITT*, Oct. 19). I think the real reason they have not been seen together is because, like many of us, Lynde simply would not want to be caught dead next to George Bush.

What I'm fascinated by is the parallel between the presidential debates and another popular TV show. With such questions as, "Mr. Dukakis, do you have passion?" or "Are you likable?" and "Have you ever committed adultery?" the press looks like it's looking for a desirable date rather than a president. So the presidential debates are nothing more than another version of *The Dating Game*.

Needless to say, it looks like America and the rest of the Earth will wind up "in trouble" whether the date is with George "Contra-coke" Bush or Mike "Midgetman is fine" Dukakis.

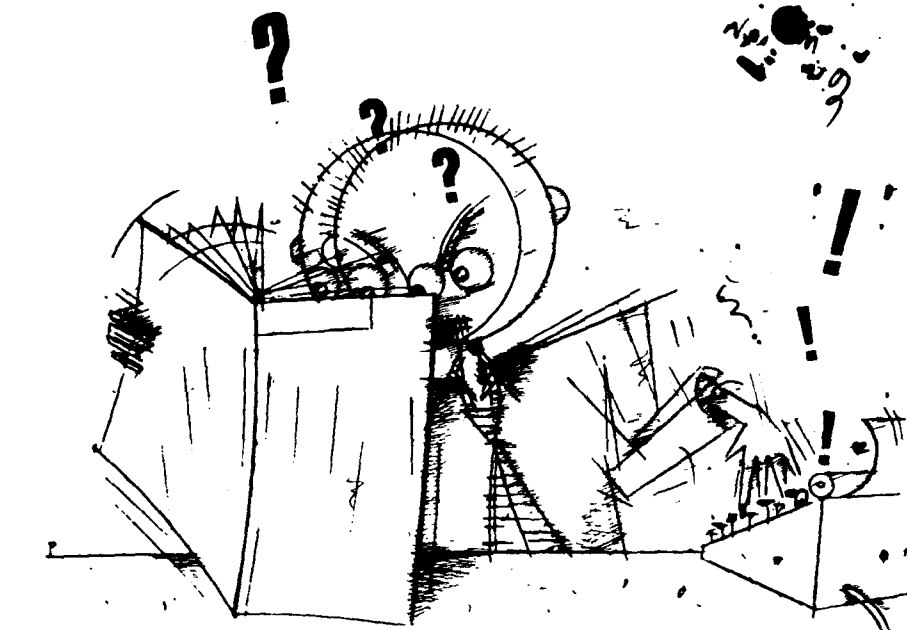
Just let us pray that the country will soon see differently and we get a new version of *Divorce Court*.

Jim Harris
Berkeley, Calif.

Hybernation pills

MAXIM GORKY, THE FAMOUS RUSSIAN WRITER, might have been describing the homeless of today in New York when he observed: "All of them are superfluous in the chaos of street life, all are out of place in the savage howl of rapacity, in the cramped duress of this gloomy fantasy of stone, glass and iron."

The superfluous homeless may expect



scant relief if we follow the sink-or-swim philosophy of the Reagan years. George Bush's "thousand points of light" is merely a euphemism for the demeaning handouts of charity. The displaced homeless will remain adrift and live in makeshift hovels while the political agenda is consumed in supporting military ventures, trimming social services, salvaging bankruptcies and other such matters unrelated to the homeless.

The homeless could escape the cold winter months ahead if science would design a pill to induce hibernation. Superfluous or not, the homeless grow in number and symbolize a failure in democracy. While many factory products now have a built-in obsolescence, factory workers likewise outlive their usefulness and are dumped on the slag heap of homelessness. In due time the homeless may form a cohesive minority, exercise civil disobedience and eventually work a change in government policy to their benefit.

Richard G. Morris
San Mateo, Calif.

All the same

DENNIS BERNSTEIN'S ARTICLE ON CENSORSHIP in the major media (*ITT*, Oct. 12), while very well done, implies that censorship does not take place in the alternative press. (Witness Bernstein's quote from *Newsday* TV magazine's Lois Draegin: "Let's face it, publishing in the mainstream media is different than publishing in the alternative press.")

But censorship *does* take place in the alternative press, e.g., *In These Times*' distinguished editors have run numerous articles supportive of Democrat Mike Dukakis' candidacy, but *none*, including my September 8 and October 1 letters, which even mildly hint at a left-progressive basis for preferring Republican George Bush.

All media package a news product that fits their editors', financiers' and audiences' perspectives. If these perspectives are capitalist, like the major media's, the stories selected will fit that mold. Editors are expected to "exercise discretion" in topic selection, which brings to mind the veracity of Mark Twain's wry observation: "Americans are blessed with two things: more liberties than anywhere else in the world and the good sense not to use them." The solution to the major media's self-censorship is not constant carping about it, but promoting *In These Times* to others.

Dino Joseph Drudi
Washington, D.C.

Charlie McKakis

THREE CHEERS FOR SUSAN J. DOUGLAS FOR HER bid to become a highly paid 1992 Democratic media consultant (*ITT*, Oct. 26). I would be proud to join this self-described "pissed-off feminist bitch from hell" on the road to Soundbite City. Besides, I think an equally pissed off stump-jumpin' West Virginia hillbilly from hell would add some balance to the ticket. The next campaign slogan should be "TAKE NO PRISONERS!!!" and the theme song should be the chorus

from the rock group Nazareth's song "Hair of the Dog," to wit, "Now you're messin' with a sonofabitch."

I can't count how many times in this campaign I wished I could possess the Duksters vocal chords to say, "Regardless of your position on taxation, George, I would rather smoke a turd in hell than read your lips." Or, regarding Sweet Young Danforth, "George, give the twit a quarter and send him home. It's almost time for Little League practice."

What do you say, Susan—let's split the job. I have a feeling that even half of that \$1,000-a-day consultant fee would be more money than you or I have ever seen, given the pay scales of the magazines we write for. See you in '92. Until then, no retreat, no surrender.

Rick Wilson
Milton, W.Va.

Salvation

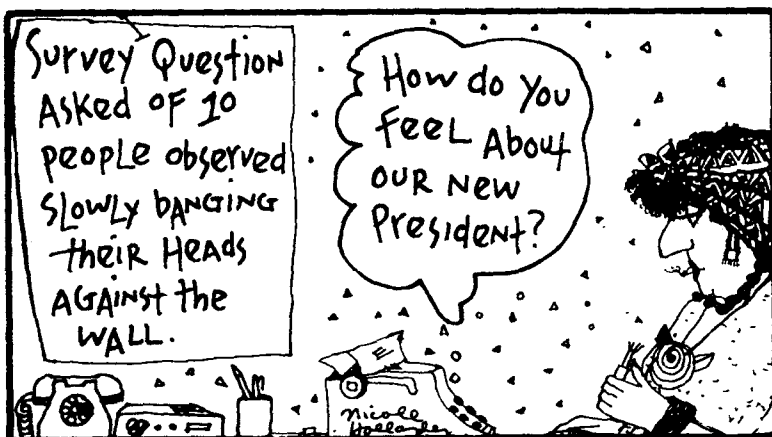
JULIUS LESTER'S STATEMENT (*ITT*, OCT. 12) HAS been running through my mind since I read it. He said, "The victim is the only one who can clear the way to salvation, but only by accepting the existential pain of refusing to become an executioner as he ceases to be a victim." It is quite powerful. At first I wistfully wished there were more people like that. Now it is beginning to raise some questions in me. Feeling victimized, one can become depressed; one can turn to drugs for relief; one can erupt with rage. To move out from being the victim *and* at the same time bear the existential pain of life is a tall order. To act intelligently, with dignity and integrity, while suffering is not an easy task. How are we to become such human beings? What kind of society do we need in order to raise our children to have this kind of strength?

I also question whether the victim is the *only* one who can clear the way to salvation, unless each and every one of us sees ourselves as victim, as deformed and throttled by our society. We are like cloth. A few wondrous strands won't make the whole cloth beautiful and strong. Most of us must become that wise and strong before any real progress toward peace and sane living can come about.

Maia Gay
Waitsfield, Vt.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander



By Saul Landau and Jack Willis

THE MEDIA IS SUDDENLY REPORTING A rash of radiation leaks and other problems at nuclear-weapons and power plants throughout the U.S.

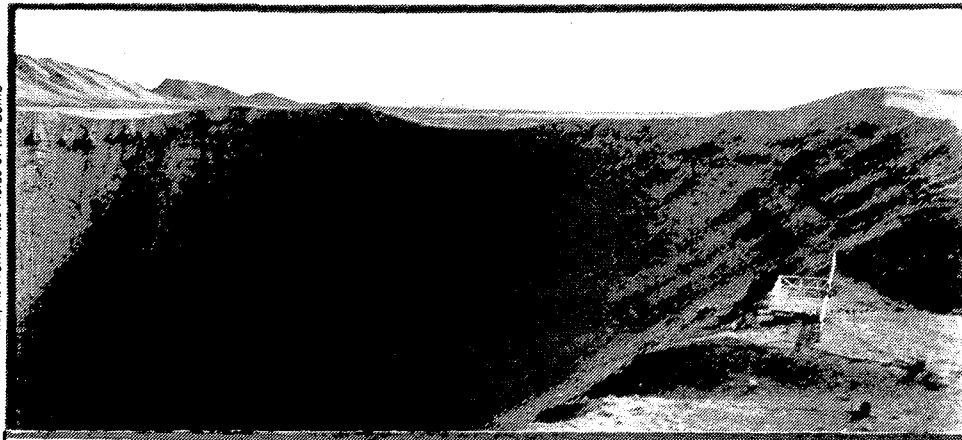
People from the surrounding communities have become alarmed, and some claim that they or their relatives have come down with cancer because of radiation exposure. They are bitter and angry because, as Doris Clawson of Fernald, Ohio, states: "The government was lying to us, and they lied and lied."

The government and nuclear "experts" deny that any proof exists of a connection between the outbreak of cancers in towns near nuclear installations and "low-level" radioactivity. The media reports these alarming incidents as if they are happening for the first time. In fact, the American government and the nuclear industry have been waging nuclear war on an unsuspecting American public for almost 40 years.

The outbreak of nuclear leaks and rising incidents of cancer date back to the early days of the Cold War and rabid anti-communism. The government conducted atmospheric tests and made information about them classified, as the national security doctrine was invoked in the midst of a crisis atmosphere. Anyone who questioned the government was told that national security required a major nuclear program, and that no information could be revealed about it and, finally, not to worry: the government would protect public health. From the '50s to the present, the nuclear establishment of the U.S. has steadfastly maintained that there are no proven health hazards from exposure to "acceptable" or low levels of radiation.

Fighting the gang: In the '70s we investigated the low-level radiation controversy, along with Penny Bernstein and our late colleague, Paul Jacobs. The results of our research appeared in a nationally televised PBS special called *Paul Jacobs and the Nu-*

The old nuclear gang is still riding high



The 600-foot deep, 1,200-foot wide crater left by a 1962 detonation at the Nevada Test Site.

clear Gang. Jacobs, an investigative reporter, began investigating the safety and health claims of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), now the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, in the '50s. By stealing a classified document from the AEC, Jacobs discovered that government scientists were well aware of the potential health hazards of low-level radiation after conducting tests in Nevada that blew residue of atmospheric blasts over populated areas.

Logic and morality dictated that the AEC should have rushed officials to the affected areas to advise residents to take long showers, scrub their bodies, send their clothes to the cleaners, bury their topsoil and get regular medical checkups. But the AEC did no such thing. Instead, they made films, wrote pamphlets and sent speakers to St. George, Utah, and other downwind towns to assure residents that they had nothing to worry about and that their health and safety would be assured by the "experts" at the AEC.

What these "experts" really feared was the public learning the truth. If citizens understood the dangers of atmospheric nuclear testing they might demand a debate on nuclear policy which could seriously jeopardize the future of nuclear power, nuclear energy and nuclear arms. Thus, in the name of national security, the health reports were made classified.

In the two decades that followed these nuclear tests, a rash of cancer spread through St. George and the surrounding area. Jacobs, who in 1957 bought a Geiger counter to check the AEC's radiation figures in areas around the Nevada test site, developed a lung cancer that traditionally afflicts heavy smokers and uranium miners. Jacobs neither smoked nor worked in the mines. He died Jan. 5, 1978, six months after his cancer was diagnosed.

Forgetting history: The "new" outbreaks of cancer in towns like Fernald, Ohio, are being reported in the media without any reference to history. Yet the leaks and

problems in nuclear installations are recurring phenomena. Why the media doesn't report this history is baffling. If the public knew about the dangers of low-level radiation it might not allow a nuclear program to continue. Citizens might challenge a policy that seriously endangers their lives.

For more than 40 years the "nuclear gang" has been reassuring the population that nuclear power is cheap, safe and clean. They cling to this Faustian dream at the expense of public health and safety. Just before Paul Jacobs died, he said that the only way to stop "the gang" from continuing its mad pursuit was to subject it to constant scrutiny and investigation. He died doing so. It's high time that Congress also began investigating by opening up the documents—past and present. Lawmakers should begin honestly to debate the subject of our nuclear future without hiding behind the shield of "national security."

Fernald resident Charles Zinser has an eight-year-old son with leukemia and a three-year-old son with bone cancer. The family lives downwind from a nuclear site that has been leaking. The "experts" continue to deny any connection between the Zinser boys' cancers and the escaping radiation. Zinser concludes exactly what relatives of the St. George victims concluded 10 years ago. "You'd think we had some kind of enemy down there trying to do away with us," he says, referring to the government scientists and nuclear plant officials nearby. He and other residents in areas surrounding nuclear plants know who the enemy is. It's time the rest of us listened, shared their pain and did something to stop the "nuclear gang." ■

Saul Landau is currently a senior fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C.

Jack Willis is an independent film writer and producer and heads the Center for Documentary Media in New York. *Paul Jacobs and the Nuclear Gang* won an Emmy in 1981. It also won the George Polk Award for investigative reporting.

Good sense still lives at the grass-roots level

By Bill Kaufman

THIS PAST SUMMER, I MOVED FROM Washington, D.C., to upstate New York. When I left, the muggy air of D.C. was thick with portentous debate, occasioned by Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. Was America in decline?

The answers that our major-party candidates provided were predictable bromides. The Republicans denied the decline; the Democrats thought that our slide could be arrested if only we gave greater powers to the central government. On one point the parties agreed: the United States has a dominant role to play in world politics, and we must never withdraw from any of our multifarious military commitments.

From hot air to fresh air: By contrast, how fresh and invigorating is the conversational air here! Upstaters seldom talk about non-local politics. (Why should they? They're mere subjects, slapped around in Albany by Gothamites and invisible to the emirs of Washington.) But they speak when

provoked—say, when Iranian air passengers are murdered by our missiles—and the bounds of debate are so much wider than in Washington. The talk in the provinces is radical, in the sense that people ignore the minutiae and penetrate to the roots of our manifold dilemmas.

The questions that one hears testify to the enduring good sense of the American people: Why are U.S. ships in the Persian Gulf? Why do we spend so damn much—\$150 billion a year—on the Europeans? Why in the hell are we subsidizing Japan's defense? Shouldn't we take care of our own instead of throwing tax dollars at foreigners?

In the power corridors of Washington, these queries would be brushed off as "simplistic" or "naive." Of course the U.S. has vital interests in the Middle East, in Central America and in Western Europe, and on every little island in the Pacific. But press our mandarins to explain further, and we see that their case against withdrawal is tautological: we must remain an empire because reverting to republican principles

and bringing the troops home will lower our "prestige" in the world, i.e., deprive us of our imperial status.

The people never asked for that status; most of my neighbors couldn't care less what happens in Nicaragua or South Africa or Israel or Korea. The right doesn't want to know this, what with its intellectual global crusaders (or, more accurately, "type-writer hawks") plotting worldwide American hegemony. Nor does the left, with its dreams of international solidarity. But that's the way it is.

The good old days: The pity is that populist isolationism goes unrepresented in national political discourse. We used to have a proud legion of hell-raisers: Idaho's

The conversational air is fresh in the boondocks.

William Borah, Wisconsin's "Fighting Bob" LaFollette, Montana's Burton Wheeler and North Dakota's holy trinity of William Langer, Usher Burdick and William Lemke.

Today we've got no one. The fraudulent self-styled "populists" of the Democratic Party are invariably button-down liberals

with private Eastern educations. They're about as populist as a Kennedy Center benefit; indeed, a majority of the Congressional Populist Caucus opposed the abolition of the mandatory 55-mph speed limit, the best litmus test in years for separating rough-hewn tribunes from paternalistic liberal dogooders. (Texas' Jim Hightower may or may not break the mold. He's an Ivy Leaguer who wears yuppie frames, but he's also eloquent as hell on the need for localized, human-scale economy.)

For now, though, Usher Burdick's Cold War lament still rings plangent: "We are without a party that will stand for this country. Both old parties want war and profits, and the plain people like you and me have no means of bringing our vote to account."

I haven't the faintest idea how to rectify our dire situation. How do we make congressional debate reflect the freewheeling, searching discussion that takes place among the people? How do we start electing farmers and welders and secretaries and clerks and surveyors and truck drivers and housewives to office? And how do we stop electing lawyers and New Class-types who falsely claim to represent the interests of ordinary folk? ■

Bill Kaufman's first novel, *Every Man a King*, is forthcoming from Soho Press.

From a View to a Death: the L-Word in Crisis

At almost exactly the moment that the California whales made it out from under the ice and into open sea, Michael Dukakis popped up in the Central Valley and, from his private Amtrak coach somewhere near Bakersfield, Calif., told the crowd that, yes, "I'm a liberal."

All the long weeks before—as international rescue teams, Soviet icebreakers, Eskimos and even messages from President Reagan pitched in to help the trapped mammals to freedom—supporters of the Massachusetts governor had been busy drilling holes through the political Arctic and peering down in hopes of detecting life below. But no signs of motion came from the beleaguered Dukakis campaign, exhausted from months of searching for sustenance in the nebulous form of "Reagan Democrats."

Up above, in the real world, liberals were aghast. They knew that Reagan Democrats were either Democrats who had become Republicans and were going to stay that way or working people drawn to any candidate—whether it was Jesse Jackson or Ronald Reagan—who stated his ideas forcefully and sounded as though he would stick by them. They knew too that the people who work in Democratic election campaigns are precisely those liberals from whom Dukakis, and his campaign had been distancing themselves, shunning blacks, militant labor or any other activist constituency staining the governor's preferred self-sell of non-ideological competence. (In the entire course of his five-page speech accepting the AFL-CIO's endorsement Dukakis did not mention the difficult word "union" even once.)

Two depressing incidents in particular left Dukakis' liberal constituency almost speechless. The first came when Dukakis refused to defend liberalism in the second debate on October 13 in Los Angeles. Margaret Garrard Warner of *Newsweek* asked him the following: "You are on the board of a group called Jobs With Peace in Boston that advocates a 25-percent cut in the defense budget and the transfer of that money to the domestic economy. My question is, do you share that goal, *perhaps as a long-range goal* [my italics]?"

To which the obvious answer would have been, "Of course I favor that as a long-range goal, Margaret, and I assume even my opponent would go along with the idea." What Dukakis actually said was, "Well, I think I was on the advisory committee, Margaret. No, I don't happen to share that goal..." Although he did then decide, in sentences of agonized complexity, that he did share that very, very long-term goal, by that time the damage was done.

Then on October 25 Dukakis was interviewed by Ted Koppel on ABC's *Nightline*. Given a chance, over 90 minutes, to expound on his personal philosophy, hopes and dreams, as usual he sounded as eloquent as a tape-recorded weather bulletin. Within a few minutes the following exchange took place:

Koppel: "Let me ask you for a definition. And you'll know where I'm coming from as soon as you hear the word. How do you define the word 'liberal'? What is a liberal in 1988?"

Dukakis: "That's maybe a question we ought to ask George Bush if he had been here."
Koppel: "No, I'd like to hear your definition."
Dukakis: "Well, I think all of us have combinations of liberal and conservative about us, Ted. I'm not a liberal."

Koppel kept at it. "I'd like to hear you define—what is a liberal?" To which Dukakis replied: "Well, if one is a liberal in the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy..." Koppel: "1988, governor." Dukakis: "...one is somebody who cares deeply about people, sees concerns, sees opportunities to make a real difference in the lives of real people and works hard in public service to help make that difference in a way that will improve the quality of life of all our people. But like most people, I have certain conservative instincts as well. I've balanced 10 budgets in a row. In many ways, I'm fiscally a lot more conservative than George Bush..."

The Desperation of Maturity

We are not really here in a situation in which liberalism's only dedicated defenders, disgusted at Dukakis' performance, will shun the ballot box or vote for Lenora Fulani and the New Alliance Party (see *In These Times*, Nov. 2). People are mature enough to know that there is no compelling third-party challenge to the status quo, and that if one candidate pledges to end support for the contras and is unlikely to appoint Klansmen or Birchers to the bench, he is plainly preferable to the man whose life credo is CIA intervention and Third World subversion, and whose entirely muted pretensions to being a liberal Republican at heart lack confirming evidence of any sort.

My associate Ken Silverstein was recently in Brazil to interview Leonardo Boff, the Franciscan liberation theologian and social activist silenced by the Vatican in 1985. Silverstein was telling Boff the U.S. left's analysis of Jimmy Carter's policies, particularly in the area of human rights. Boff, who like many Brazilians was following the U.S. election closely and was hoping for a Dukakis victory, said that this was puzzling to him, and that from Latin America the choice did not appear particularly difficult. When Carter became president, Boff said, torture in Brazil stopped. And when Carter came to Brazil and invited the great Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns of São Paulo to ride with him in his car to the airport, this had an immense impact and was seen as a major rebuff to the military.

So in the shriveled political confines of the polling booth most people on the left end of the political spectrum either will vote or have already voted—depending on when you read these lines—for Dukakis. But they surely did so or will do so knowing that with the Dukakis campaign came an intimation of the bankruptcy of the L-word in the hands of its supposed defenders, and that it's no longer a matter of denouncing the sham of the Democrats' lip service to liberal principle, since these Democrats are no longer able to give even lip service.

After all, what did Dukakis say in the Central Valley, as the whales swam toward the open sea? "Yes," he told the crowd, "I'm a

liberal in the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy.... Truman was someone who believed deeply in standing up for average Americans, but who also believed in balancing budgets."

That same day, the *New York Times* endorsed Dukakis over Bush on the sole grounds that Dukakis is the more likely of

Avoiding the "U-word": during the entire course of his five-page speech accepting the AFL-CIO's endorsement, Michael Dukakis did not mention the difficult word "union" even once.

the two to cut the deficit. The man the *Times* is looking to is the governor who took an ax to social spending in Massachusetts, the man whose constant call for "tough choices" sent just the right message to advocates of planned shrinkage, cuts in entitlements and so forth.

So what have the liberal legions disdained by Dukakis, and scarcely encouraged by that faltering endorsement of the L-word in the Central Valley, got to look forward to in the next four years? We have arrived at an hour when the Pentagon no

longer needs a Soviet threat to justify military spending, since the ACLU will clearly suffice. One well-known ACLU lawyer has said that in the event of a Bush victory she would not advocate the bringing of test cases to expand existing law, since the Reagan judges already on the bench would simply use the excuse to overturn any laws they find distasteful.

One labor activist is beginning to look to city-to-city coalitions that can build anti-corporate campaigns such as the one that kept the General Motors plant in Van Nuys open, and linking them to such issues as toxic waste and protection of immigrants' rights. Such a perspective recognizes the central importance of local organizing, particularly in relation to union activism, and of learning one of the prime lessons of the anti-intervention movement—that an independent political presence is the prerequisite for applying effective pressure on Washington. Those in Congress who voted against contra aid did not do so because they thought they had the anti-intervention movement in their pockets. They did so because they recognized a constituency they had to listen to.

Most of all, people on the left know that what is now incumbent on them is a great leap forward in energy and perspective, since the campaign has shown that on the level of national politics (though not at the local or state levels, often enough) the center didn't hold, and they had better define the struggle in their own terms, since the "center" no longer knows what to say or, when it finally decides to say it, as in Bakersfield, does so far too late, in terms no one believes or trusts anyway. ■

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Waldheim: The Missing Years
By Robert Edwin Herzstein
Arbor House/William Morrow
303 pp., \$18.95

By Antololi Ilyashov

How the Cold War saved Waldheim



Kurt Waldheim: dumb luck and damned ambitious.

FROM NAZI COLLABORATOR TO secretary-general of the U.N., the rough outline of Kurt Waldheim's scandalous ascent is probably familiar to most. Less well-known, however, is the twisted weave of Cold War machinations and dumb luck that time and again secured Waldheim's seemingly precarious position.

As historian Robert Herzstein puts it in *Waldheim: The Missing Years*, this is the story of a man, "who was not evil but merely ambitious and clever, a man who in many ways was both a product and a reflection of the catastrophic era that engulfed his native land between 1914 and 1955. He was a man, like many of his generation, who had tried to dispose of the awkward baggage of his past simply by forgetting about it. That baggage, however, didn't disappear. It merely gathered dust in musty archives, waiting for someone to come along and recognize it for what it was."

Herzstein, a leading expert on the

Nazi era and one of the researchers who uncovered the Waldheim story in 1987, provides ample evidence of Waldheim's complicity in wartime atrocities or at least knowledge of them. He leaves it to the reader to

decide whether Waldheim was an unknowing victim of the times, a mere cog in the machine, as Waldheim later professed. Yet it is the understanding of the emerging Cold War acrobatics between the powers

and their interests in the immediate postwar period that is most illuminating here.

The jockeying of Allied interests and their interim resolutions are revealing. The mechanics of making those diplomatic decisions may seem obscure (especially in the shorthand of a brief review), but they are important, especially in the case of someone like Waldheim. Placing

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him within this shifting spectrum of political interests helps clarify the objectives of the powers in our midst today.

Open and shut: Between 1945 and 1948, there were opportunities to open Waldheim's "secret" to the world by the U.N. War Crimes Commission (UNWCC), but circumstances shielded him. As an adviser to such major Austrian political figures as former Undersecretary of State Karl Gruber, Waldheim escaped retribution. Gruber, along with his personal political aide, Fritz Molden, had strong ties to U.S. intelligence (Molden married the daughter of OSS [later CIA] chief Allen Dulles, for whom he had worked during the war).

By 1946, the U.S. had already de-

cided not to extradite accused war criminals to Yugoslavia. Austria, on the other hand, was attempting to neutralize the damage of allying closely with Germany. Retaining its borders, infusing its government with anti-Nazi members to convince the victors that it was democratic, and seeking economic aid were important national goals.

Austrian relations with Yugoslavia were becoming an important concern, because Yugoslavia was seeking retribution for wartime losses. Yugoslavia, as a member of the "Eastern bloc," was intent on getting Waldheim's name on the UNWCC list as an "A"-list war criminal. But the likelihood of successful prosecution depended on whose standards were applied. The Western powers defined "evidence" somewhat differently from the Yugoslavs.

Information shield: Yet even if Yugoslavia had amassed an airtight case against Waldheim, there was virtually no chance the Western Allies would have approved his extradition. They would have been wary of the impact of such a move on the Austrian government. What is more, U.S. forces in Germany and Austria did not extradite anyone in their zones of occupation who was "of in-

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The CIA/Nazi spies who came in from out of the Cold War

Blowback

By Christopher Simpson
Weidenfeld and Nicolson
398 pp., \$19.95

By Russ Bellant

BLOWBACK MAY BE THE DECADE'S most important book on the Cold War. In it, author Christopher Simpson outlines the origins of U.S. government policies that recruited Nazi networks after World War II to work in clandestine warfare in Eastern Europe and the USSR. Simpson identifies the policies and policy-makers that approved Nazi recruitment. He names the Nazi leaders and networks recruited, citing their roles in Hitler's war and genocidal plans in Eastern Europe and the USSR.

The understanding that entire Nazi networks were recruited is key here. The presence of collaborators in the U.S. is often seen as a matter of undesirable individuals who slipped into the U.S. In actuality, the U.S. recruited significant elements of Waffen SS leadership in order to continue paramilitary warfare in Eastern Europe and the USSR. Some of these military actions continued until the early '50s.

Jobs for Nazis: When various Nazi collaborators were found to have been recruited by the CIA and other

agencies, the recruiters' excuses went something like this: "After World War II, the U.S. was threatened by the USSR and knew very little about this aggressive enemy. We had to go to whomever we could, because our survival depended on it. The Nazis had useful information we needed."

Such was the rationale given for the U.S. recruitment of Klaus Barbie and others (see accompanying story). But these rationalizations ignore the aggressive intent of these postwar programs, that essentially were priming the pump for World War III.

Simpson cites high-level Pentagon documents that show plans to use Nazi collaborators in pre-World War III covert action and postatomic war guerrilla armies. He notes, "By the beginning of 1949 the two projects [atomic strikes and émigré military units] were gradually merging into a single strategy combining pre-conflagration psychological warfare and clandestine action under the control of the CIA and State Department with postnuclear guerrilla armies under military command."

Not only were Nazis and their collaborators aided and protected, they also helped create the climate for a U.S. military response to Cold War events. Simpson notes that in 1946

U.S. military intelligence believed that it was highly unlikely, for logistical reasons, that the USSR could mount an attack on Western Europe for at least a decade. Military intelli-

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gence noted, for instance, that railroads were being dismantled that would be needed for any Red Army attack.

Postwar "intelligence": These estimates changed, however, with the recruitment of the Gehlen Organization into the CIA. Gen. Reinhard Gehlen headed Hitler's military

Simpson names the Nazi leaders and networks recruited by the U.S.

intelligence operations on the Eastern Front. After the war, he parlayed his intelligence "expertise" into a CIA job. Gehlen brought in his wartime associates and reconstituted his émigré operations. These so-called experts on the USSR became a primary source of information on Soviet capabilities and intentions.

One historian and biographer of Gehlen estimated that during the

early Cold War period, "70 percent of all the U.S. government's information on Soviet forces and armaments came from the Gehlen Organization." Simpson quotes former CIA analyst and Soviet affairs expert Arthur Macy Cox as saying, "The Gehlen Organization was the primary source of intelligence that claimed that the Soviets were about to attack [West] Germany. [That was] the biggest bunch of baloney then, and it is still baloney today."

Cox told Simpson that "our allies said, 'You are putting Nazis at senior levels of your intelligence,' and they were right."

Perhaps no more odious an example can be found of that U.S. realignment with Nazis than the recruitment of Alois Brunner, "a man considered by many to be the most depraved Nazi killer still at large," according to Simpson. During the war Brunner worked for Adolph Eichmann, the planner of the extermination of Europe's Jews. He trained Nazi operatives "in how to carry out the destruction of Jews quickly and thoroughly," notes Simpson. Brunner later reported on his operations in the Middle East for Gehlen and the CIA. Brunner lives comfortably today in Damascus.

Blowback also discusses CIA use of "captured Nazi German assets, including the money and gold that the Nazis had looted from the Jews," to finance covert operations during the 1948 elections in Italy. The same source of funds was used to start the National Committee for a Free Europe, a domestic propaganda

project of the CIA designed to support Radio Free Europe.

Another domestic CIA project, the Crusade for Freedom (on whose National Council Reagan served) spent more money advertising than the "combined total of all the money spent on the Truman/Dewey presidential election campaign of 1948," according to Simpson. All of which begins to illustrate the fact that the congressional ban on CIA domestic operations was a dead letter from the beginning of the agency's operations.

Detailed footnoting and an extensive bibliography undergird Simpson's effort, based primarily on U.S. government documents. Simpson tells readers where National Archives documents can be located, which is a boost to scholars and journalists who have failed to pursue some of the ugly realities of the Cold War that *Blowback* has revealed. Simpson gives us a different vantage of the Cold War, and exposes the depths to which government agencies stooped in order to pursue a potential new level of warfare more murderous than World War II.

The Cold War has long distorted our domestic priorities and provided a base for a strengthening right-wing role in American politics. *Blowback* is essential reading for those who would reverse this retrogression and secure an American future free of the legacy of Hitler's legions. ■ **Russ Bellant** is author of *Old Nazis, the New Right and the Reagan Administration*, available from Political Research Associates, Cambridge, Mass.



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Nazi torturer Klaus Barbie (center, near pillar) is the focus of Marcel Ophuls' documentary, *Hotel Terminus*.

Camera doesn't lie; everything else does

Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie
Directed by Marcel Ophuls

By Pat Aufderheide

MARCEL OPHULS, SON OF GERMAN Jewish émigré filmmaker Max Ophuls, has made a career of asking hard questions about public morality and justice. If his series of massive documentaries is a continual search for the meaning of his own life as an exile in several cultures, the films also document impressively and contentiously the

soul of the West in our time. His latest film, *Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie*, is his most far-reaching.

Ophuls works documentary on as grand a scale as his father created Hollywood extravaganzas. Still his best known work is *The Sorrow and the Pity*, a four-hour probe, interview by interview, of collaboration in Vichy France—until then a hush-hush issue. The film shredded careers and pretensions, and reopened wounds. *A Sense of Loss*, about divided Ireland, and *Memory of Justice*, about war crimes tribunals and Vietnam, were equally ambi-

ous. Yet these films proved less scandalizing perhaps because the comfortable myths they punctured were less intimately felt, and also because their structure was more sprawling.

Ophuls' style demands careful, prolonged attention—and rewards it. His style is as distinctive as that of Fred Wiseman, his manner as obsessive as that of *Shoah* filmmaker Claude Lanzmann. Ophuls composes his films exclusively of highly edited interviews, often giving subjects the rope with which they obligingly hang themselves. The interviews reveal less the damning facts, à la *60 Minutes*, than character. The central question is always one of moral choice.

Ophuls is not a kind presence on screen, nor a sympathetic editor. But

he recognizes ambiguity and complexity, while at the same time he assumes the filmmaker's job of judge and jury. It takes time to put together, with him, the many human facets of a situation in which moral rectitude is at stake. In the process, we are forced to ask about the way we ourselves smudge the lines of responsibility, how we pretend not to know what we cannot avoid knowing, how we protect ourselves from the consequences of knowledge.

Klaus Barbie's world: In *Hotel Terminus*, Ophuls has taken up the infamous Nazi torturer, whose trial in France revisited unsettled issues about the public conscience and the war. He aims not simply to blame Barbie but indicts the systems and attitudes that made it possible for

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Ophuls: sorrow, pity and much more

By Pat Aufderheide

MARCEL OPHULS, IN NEW YORK for the opening of *Hotel Terminus* at the New York Film Festival, spoke with *In These Times* about his documentary and the public reaction to the issues it raises.

Your style of documentary is highly personal, and develops on a scale that we're not accustomed to. I don't like *cinéma vérité*, this whole idea that fiction is lying and documentary is true. Also I challenge the idea that documentary, because it is authentic, doesn't have to tell a story in a narrative form, doesn't have to find answers to the question of narrative. Because I am in opposition to this kind of smugness, it has forced me into doing what probably comes to me naturally anyway,

which is to use interviews and non-fiction technique in a way that is close to classic cinema.

Did you think about different national audiences in making the film?

I never construct a film for a European or an American audience. That would transform the film into some form of propaganda. I believe that if

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I can convey it coherently and use logic and rational analysis and the tools of my trade, then what interests or surprises me or makes me laugh or think will have the same effect on others. I don't want to aim at one particular group, because in show business the basic rule of communication is one-to-one. The filmmaker is not talking to collective groups,

but individuals.

In the film, you interview people on the street in Europe, but not in the U.S.

In the American part I didn't talk to people in the street because people didn't really know who Barbie was. It wasn't covered here the way it was there. And the people who, for religious or ethnic reasons, feel outrage are the most concerned.

I wonder if you could evoke the same reactions in the U.S. now, even about something like Vietnam.

One of the reasons *The Sorrow and the Pity* did so well at the time was that we were still under the influence of the '60s, both in France and in the U.S. The people who saw the film at the time, mostly young people, were still wondering about protest and resistance in their own lives, and they were automatically relating moral positions and courage or opportunism. I don't know if that can happen today.

I especially wonder after watching the exhibitionism on morning TV here. I watched Geraldo Rivera—

yesterday it was about incest and today about best-selling graverobbers. They are complicit in the attitude that if it makes money, then we just feed off each other. Greed, I suppose. I don't think you just get that attitude at the political level. One sometimes thinks that Hitler didn't lose the war, and Barbie didn't lose the war, and that Nixon was perhaps the winner in Watergate. Although there is something in American culture, a safety valve—freedom of speech, the Freedom of Information Act—which makes a reaction possible when things go too far one way or another.

The extent of the collaboration with Barbie seems so total that it's hard to understand Barbie's particular evil. And sometimes it seems like everyone is involved in the collective evil that made him possible. The film doesn't help us much on Barbie's own evil. If I had had material I could have helped, but the fact that Barbie couldn't be interviewed [at the time of the trial] limited me.

I think there is one explanation for a Barbie: that once you have re-

peatedly taken on yourself mass criminal actions, then guilt or remorse means suicide. So the very fact that such people survive means that they have been able to adjust psychologically, to reject it. How come Barbie is still a Nazi? Because he has no choice. Having done what he has done, he is either a Nazi or else he's dead. There were cases at Nuremberg of people who, when they saw the film, suddenly got religion and tried to commit suicide.

The danger is that the film has a tendency to drown out a mass murderer's individual responsibility in a vague notion of complicity, that we are all guilty because we are all complicit. That may be because we were interviewing many people who were complicit or let it happen, so the focus may have shifted. But the intention of the film is not to say we're all guilty, and so why should Barbie be more guilty than the others. That's why in the end Simone La Grange and Lise Lesevre are there to put us back on course.

There would be no need for putting anyone on trial if our view of life were that everything is deterministic. A mass criminal is different from someone who doesn't open a door when a family is being dragged away. How do we know we wouldn't do the same thing? It's very likely that we would. Having your house surrounded is not something that encourages people to be heroic.

This has to do with political attitudes and philosophical attitudes that we go through this crappy century with. The work I do is usually extremely well received and well understood by people, say, who work on left-wing magazines. On this particular issue, on determinism, people who are influenced by what until a few years ago was generally accepted as a Marxist view of history might argue, "Why put someone on trial if they are just a product of circumstances and society?" That is something that is hard to answer. That may be one reason why Marxism is losing influence.

Film is a very expensive medium, and you persist in making films that don't fit a commercial mode.

There's a lot of wear and tear on me and the poor bastards who finance me in this kind of film. I'm not a martyr to any cause, but to speak in a different way of determinism, I don't do this gladly. I'd much rather be doing other kinds of things. Right now, if somebody would just send me a good script written by someone else, and I would understand when I read it why the dialogue is shaped the way it is and why the shots have the relationship they do, I could get a nice cast and film it.

At the moment, I have to finish the book on Barbie, which Simon and Schuster gave me an advance for. I never would have gotten into the film if I hadn't eaten up the advance. I may teach, and I may see with my agents if I can make a couple more fiction movies before ...l'après.

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IN THESE TIMES, NOV. 9, 1988, 19

By Susan J. Douglas

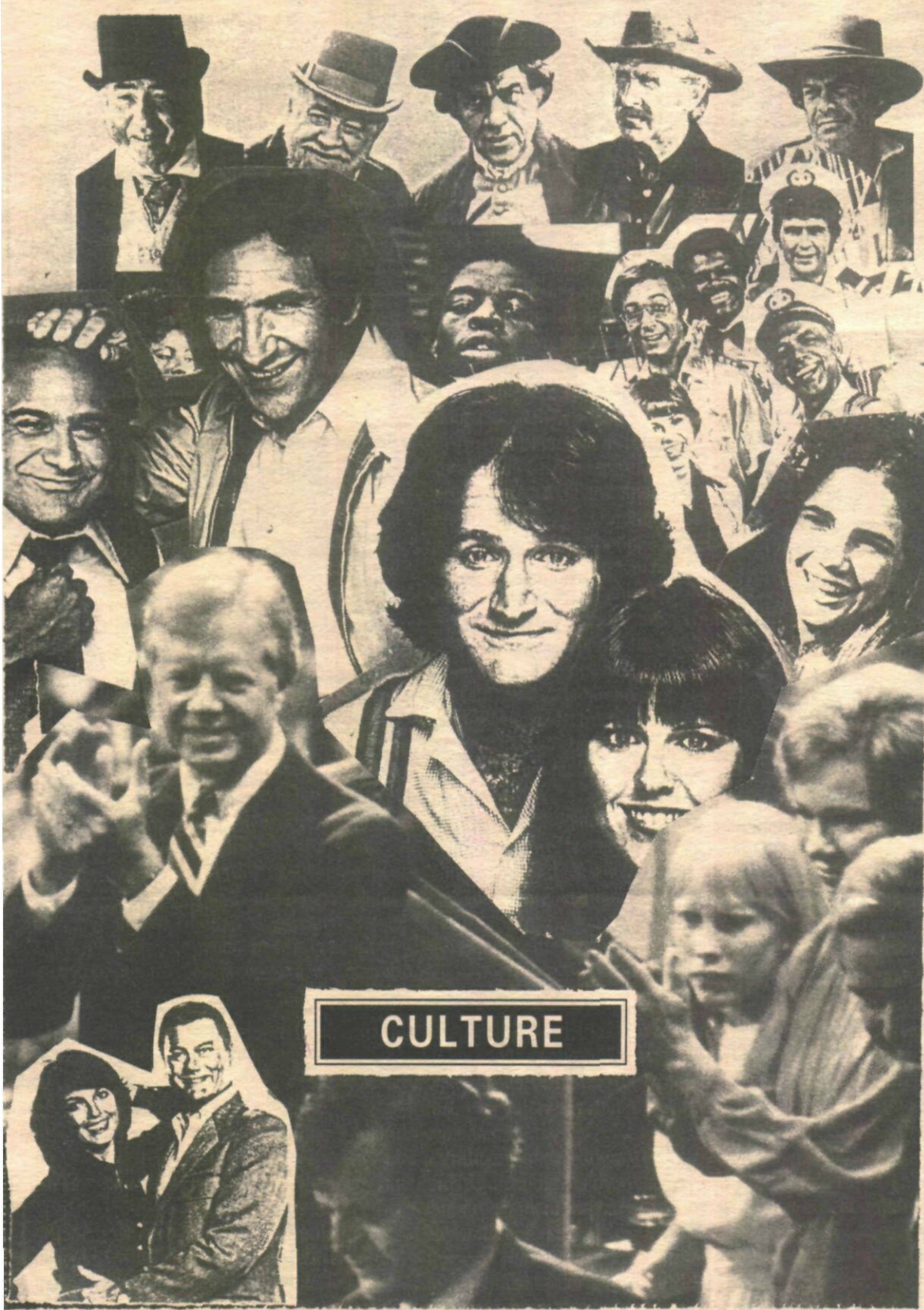
NOW I DON'T, AS A RULE, BELIEVE in "the good ol' days." And looking back on the cultural milieu of 1976, when *In These Times* first began publication, it's clear there was plenty to wince about. Remember, for example, disco fever, Elizabeth Ray, the debut of *Charlie's Angels* and all those bloated, phony bicentennial celebrations? Not only did we have to endure repeated playings of "Rocky Mountain High," we also had to listen to John Denver say, "I can do anything. One of these days I'll be so complete I won't be human. I'll be a god." Hot new recording artists included Peter Frampton and, I shudder to remind you, the Captain and Tennille.

The paperback bestseller list included such stories as *Doris Day: Her Own Story*. And let's not overlook Gerald Ford's "Whip Inflation Now" buttons or Dino De Laurentiis' remake of *King Kong*. Had enough? Don't forget that the two most highly rated TV shows, *Happy Days* and *Laverne and Shirley*, wallowed in historical amnesia, and not far behind them were the two shows most likely to produce reverse peristalsis among sensible viewers, *Little House on the Prairie* and *The Waltons*. In 1976 James Buckley was a presidential candidate. You get the idea: it was hardly the best of times.

Nostalgia for the '70s? And yet, as we consider where we've been and where we're going culturally, I can't help eyeing patches of the media landscape of 1976 with a certain longing. The film industry actually thought that government conspiracy was a deadly serious topic that audiences should be exercised about: in one year we could see *All the President's Men*, *Three Days of the Condor* and *The Marathon Man*. *Network*, a highly acclaimed and successful film, skewered media cynicism and complacency even before we had *USA Today* or *Geraldo*. I was able to watch *Rocky* with unalloyed pleasure: it was before I knew what a xenophobic, self-aggrandizing pea brain Sylvester Stallone was, or how such a grunting troglodyte would influence moviemaking. The TV miniseries of the year was not some excrescence like *North and South*, but *Roots*. Newspapers still had journalists who thought of themselves as investigative reporters. *Ms.* was still a feminist magazine.

And just to rub a little salt in the wound, let me cite a few excerpts from a highly publicized political speech given that year. "Too many have had to suffer at the hands of a political and economic elite who have shaped decisions and never had to account for mistakes nor to suffer from injustice. When unemployment prevails, they never stand in line looking for a job. When deprivation results from a confused and bewildering welfare system, they never go without food or clothing or a place to sleep. When the public schools are torn by strife,

Feudal chic and '70s nostalgia: cultural discourse in a war zone



their children go to exclusive private schools.... The powerful always manage to discover and to occupy niches of special influence and privilege. An unfair tax structure serves their needs. And tight secrecy always seems to prevent reform." The speaker was Jimmy Carter, delivering his acceptance address at the Democratic National Convention. He assured us that "we can have an American government that does not oppress or spy on its own people, but respects our dignity and our privacy and our right to be left alone." Ah, Jimmy, if only you knew. If only we all knew what we were in for.

An exercise in feudalism: A lot has changed since then, both in the world of politics and in the media environment that upholds the status quo. All of the evils Carter railed against in his speech have become virtues as the media celebrate privilege, genuflect before authority

and promote increasingly creative ways to invade our privacy. Under Reaganism, humankind's most piggy tendencies have hogged the spotlight.

We've been surrounded by images and messages antithetical to democracy, and much more supportive of another form of social organization: feudalism. There has been the unbridled adulation of elites, an almost

Doing the dozens on the last 12 years of cultural corrosion.

palpable longing for a permanent aristocracy with King Ron and Queen Nancy—bedecked in extravagant, if "borrowed," raiments—at the top, guided by the court astrologer. We've also seen an unre-

cedented peacetime celebration of the military.

Moreover, there has been an increased insistence on the necessity of keeping the rest of us under constant surveillance. We, the peasants, are supposed to remain outside the palace ramparts, closely watched by palace officials, with every aspect of us, especially our bodily fluids, subject to repeated inspections.

The militarization of popular culture in the '80s is especially disturbing. The military-industrial complex has been repackaged and humanized, its daring but selfless agents wrapped in the aura of a new chivalric code. These 20th-century knights go forth, armed with very big, very long, shiny, cylindrical weapons—be they guns or airplanes—and protect "deserving," patriotic Americans from the forces of darkness. With the discovery that the Vietnam War can now be a source of entertainment,

a new flood of films and TV shows about the military has inundated the large and small screen. Certainly the Rambo films come to mind, as do *Top Gun* and the Vietnam films. But we also think of TV shows: *Tour of Duty*, *China Beach*, *The New Dirty Dozen* and my personal favorite, *Supercarrier*.

Supercarrier is the Love Boat gone to the Persian Gulf with Spuds MacKenzie on board. On *Supercarrier* boys—and occasionally girls—fly jet fighters, obey orders and learn that the U.S. military is commanded by altruistic, fair-minded and noble officers whose main goal in life is to ensure social justice at home and the self-determination of Third World peoples abroad.

When the show wants to emphasize the rightness and poignancy of some such moral message, the camera cuts to the dog/mascot aboard ship who, with a big spot around one eye, looks strikingly like Petey of the Little Rascals and like everyone's new pal Spuds. As the mascot licks the faces of the crusty but warm-hearted commanders, we watch the image of the military being rehabilitated before our very eyes. The military isn't run by the William Westmorelands and Oliver Norths of the world. No way! Our military, the decent, selfless, caring military that lets you be all that you can be, is run by Father Knows Best. This is the sort of distortion of history and reality that is reminiscent of, say, German popular culture in the '30s.

Pop culture incursions: The militarization of popular culture hasn't stopped, however, with such obvious examples. Just listen to the news as the anchors and reporters recount the "routs," "opening volleys," "mortal blows," "strategizing" and "casualties" of the presidential election. The language of battle, of physical confrontation, has so ingrained itself into electronic journalism that framing events in this fashion now seems natural.

Or explore a very different arena: open a women's magazine and scan the cosmetics ads. Manufacturers of moisturizers have recently moved from the more oblique and mystifying references to their products' "delivery systems" and "neutralizing agents" to straight out associations with the Pentagon and Star Wars. Elizabeth Arden has just introduced "Immune UV Defense Cream" and Estée Lauder has countered with its new "Skin Defender" that shields skin behind a protective barrier. Military R&D thus becomes a woman's savior, a realm dominated by hard-working, sensitive researchers with only her best interests at heart. If only she acquiesces to this authority, it will protect her from unwanted alien forces "out there."

This fear of the unknown also touches on another distressing cultural discourse: the obsessive fear of personal, bodily contamination, and the notion that any measures to prevent such contamination must be rigorously enforced. Most serious is the media hysteria about the con-

tamination of bodily fluids: the urine by drugs and the blood by AIDS. This terror has produced several unsavory media spectacles in which the inspection of bodily fluids, especially those of black men, becomes headline news and provides morality tales for our times.

Our bodies, their business:

The most recent such spectacle featured Ben Johnson as the black man who could have had it all but just couldn't say no. The point here is not how one feels about steroid use by athletes or their trainers. What matters is that Ben Johnson's urine has received far more media scrutiny than, say, Dan Quayle's brain or George Bush's connections with drug runners in Central America. Before Johnson, inordinate attention was focused on drug use by Dwight Gooden and Len Bias. The contaminated blood and urine of black men

and gays has been held up as the major threat to the body politic.

These men, singled out as the new plague bearers, are meant to embody—and to pay dearly for—all our more subterranean fears about the pollution of our political and ecological environment, a poisoning made much worse under the suicidal, live-for-today policies of Reaganism. The Ben Johnson story, and the way it was framed, ("these black men, they just can't help cheating, and they don't have the discipline or the sense to protect themselves against physical harm") promotes a pernicious, racist paternalism that gives rise to routine urine testing of job applicants and to the just-passed, highly repressive Omnibus Drug bill (see *In These Times*, Oct. 19). This insistence that social problems today are best identified and diagnosed under a microscope, instead of with a wide-

angle lens, effectively deflects attention from the big picture, in which the kindly looking Father Knows Best is actually getting away with murder.

And how are we supposed to respond to our times, to the increasing authoritarian control over how we live and think? How should we greet the subtle insinuation of police-state tactics and imagery into our common-sense notions of how the world works? We're supposed to retreat into adolescence, to abdicate adulthood and its responsibilities.

The collective fantasy that accompanies deference to the all-knowing, uniformed white fathers is a desire to hide under the covers, to become kids again. Notice all the movies about switched identities, in which men in their 30s (or even older) become transformed into adolescent boys. Or the ads that acknowledge

that when we're at work we're simply masquerading as adults, secretly pining for recess, our sneakers and our candy bars.

A good example of this is the latest Suzuki Sidekick campaign. We see a harried stockbroker struggling to juggle buy and sell offers on the floor, or a mother coping with young children. The music we hear is a song from the stage play *Peter Pan*, "I Won't Grow Up." After several lines of lyrics from the song, the voice-over asks, "Aren't there enough hours in the day when you have to be a grown-up?" Sure there are. So, hey, be a kid. Go out and play. Let your big brother take care of things for you.

So, gang, this is where we are 12 years after *In These Times* began publication: much closer to 1984 than many of us can bear to admit. It's like a '60s nightmare, or even a

nightmare from 1976: "liberal" is a dirty word, sexual repression is in, and people with anything more than traces of milk and Oreos in their blood or urine are blacklisted as un-American lepers.

The military hasn't become just respectable, it's become glamorous and imbued with omniscience and nobility. How and when the media will get back to this side of the looking glass and shake off these obsessions and delusions is anyone's guess. But those of us exiled outside the palace ramparts must continue to insist, as loudly and disruptively as we can, that the emperor has no clothes and, given the behavior we've seen, that his bodily fluids and those of the court jesters around him, deserve considerably more scrutiny than ours. ■

Susan J. Douglas writes frequently for *In These Times*.

Waldheim

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terest" to their intelligence community (see accompanying stories). Waldheim was one of those people. By the end of 1947 Army Intelligence had been keeping a file on him for more than two years. Waldheim's position in Austria's foreign ministry gave him access to a wealth of sensitive information.

As events unfolded, by 1948 Yugoslavia had its doubts about extraditing Waldheim. Whatever his culpability, Waldheim was "too small a fish" to be worth the trouble. And the Yugoslavs wanted Waldheim at Gruber's side. For Yugoslavia, Waldheim became a means to an end: the eventual destruction of Gruber.

According to Herzstein, the U.S. or its contacts in the Austrian government failed to understand that the Yugoslavs were not playing the Soviets' game. Belgrade and Moscow were increasingly at odds. Tito, in Belgrade, was acting on his own without informing the Kremlin. Stalin and the Soviet Union had their own interests in mind, too.

Under these conditions an indictment against Waldheim would embarrass the Soviets as much as the West, for it would call into question Moscow's halfhearted support for Yugoslavia's territorial claims. At the very least, it would prove a major obstacle to any rapprochement between the Soviets and the Austrians.

What the Austrians understood was that Yugoslavia desperately needed economic aid. Yugoslav emissaries were even cautiously inquiring about Marshall Plan aid. The Austrians, in turn, were conducting secret talks with their old enemies, though maintaining their conflicting boundary claims. By July 1947 the Yugoslavs dropped their pursuit of Waldheim's case. This was reflective of a major shift in the geopolitical landscape, namely the opening of a profound rift between Yugoslavia and the USSR. Yugoslavia needed to reopen her trade to the West, including gaining access to the contested cities of Trieste and Villach.

One of the luckiest beneficiaries of this turnabout was Waldheim, whose dossier the Yugoslavian government determined it was now prudent to suppress. In July 1948 it somehow "lost" the Waldheim extradition request as well as the appended war criminals list that contained his name.

Chilling out in the Cold War: After this critical time of foreign negotiations and settling of terms between the powers, everything seemed to ride smoothly for Waldheim. Between 1948 and 1955 he was in the secure employ of the Austrian government as a diplomat and political official.

Between 1955 and 1982 he expanded his diplomatic skills and became involved in international affairs, specifically the U.N., where he was secretary-general from 1972 to 1981. In 1986 he was voted president of Austria for a six-year term.

The reader is still left with an enigma, a perfect character for a psychological, existential drama. Every time Waldheim is to be exposed for his wrongdoings, circumstances save him.

What is most disturbing is how such a man could rise so fast and so undetected to the top as a world statesman. Other lesser criminals or accomplices avoided detection, but they sank into obscurity or went into hiding. Waldheim was prominent all the way.

Yet the uniqueness if not the abnormality of Waldheim's circumstances as counterposed to the normality of an ambitious, diligent individual striving for a career can be seen as a real-life tragedy. The lessons it may provide for future generations are inscribed in the clash of political interests between the East and West immediately following the war. The modus vivendi created as a result from those times in world politics still haunts us today. Waldheim is only a personification of those disturbing times, his life a metaphor for continuing East-West tensions. ■

Anatoli Ilyashov is a writer and historian residing in Los Angeles.

Barbie

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him to flourish in four decades after the war. It takes Ophuls more than four hours this time, in the style to which we have become accustomed: probing interviews, edited with the sensibility of a savage essayist who understands the manipulative value both of intercutting and of letting the camera dwell on a subject.

Hotel Terminus, which opened in October at the New York Film Festival and is gradually moving nationwide, works without the exposé advantage of *The Sorrow and the Pity*. Indeed, the story is in why Klaus Barbie wasn't a story for such a long time. Barbie's whereabouts in Bolivia were a poorly kept secret; French TV even paid him for an interview before his final capture. Barbie was, after the war, a valuable asset for the U.S. government, which employed him and his Nazi underground network to spy on suspected communists in the postwar anti-communist hunt. (For a full investigation of the U.S. intelligence's use of Nazis, see accompanying book review; the author, Christopher Simpson, was director of research and assistant director for the film.) If the film seems both long and tiring, it is because it attempts to challenge not just individuals but entire systems—government intelligence, media practice, entrenched habits and attitudes.

Ophuls' interviews add up to the realization that evil is not merely individual. Barbie did not earn the epithet "Butcher of Lyons" without help, active and passive. Nor did he singlehandedly build a lucrative career as a spy/arms-dealer/drug-smuggler. Ophuls also shows, by having people tell us and not tell us, how people can think of themselves as good and make choices that are evil. Few of this film's interviewees are conscienceless. Fewer still are repentant. If their viewpoints maintain a resolutely partial picture of reality, their will not to recognize their own participation in a wider evil makes those viewpoints nar-

rower still. This comes out most clearly in interviews with the retired American officials who helped Barbie become a postwar success.

Confrontation with humanity: When Barbie went on trial in France, the import of the trial became murky. Was it a revival of Nazi war crimes? A judgment on Vichy France? On the American use of Barbie and other Nazis? The general reaction to the trial—a reaction echoed again and again in the film—was that it all happened 40 years ago, and we should begin getting over the past.

Ophuls attacks that attitude frontally, and attempts to mount on film the moral spectacle that the trial failed to be. He revives the horror of Barbie's crimes, interviewing people whose lives were shattered by the man.

In the face of such anguish, the irritated reactions of German and French passersby become more than simple apathy. ("Old people should be left alone," says one, to Ophuls sharp retort, "And what about the children who never grew up?") The languid dismissal of Holocaust crimes by right-wing politicians becomes a self-condemnation.

Evil in the aftermath: But far more troubling are the agents of Barbie's later careers. Retired American officials blandly acknowledge that they found Barbie useful. The mission had simply changed. The job now was to get communists; Barbie might be unsavory, but he also had the information they wanted.

The web of power and interest protecting Barbie seems nearly impenetrable, and appallingly conventional. But this film is also dotted with dissident heroes, such as Beate Klarsfeld, the Nazi-hunter who staged a public protest in Bolivia; Resistance leader Lise Lesevre, who lost her husband and son when they were tortured by Barbie; and the school employees at Izieu, who even today mourn the children lost to Barbie.

Ophuls dedicates the film to a "good neighbor," Mme. Bontout (her name another proof that real-

ity is more unlikely than fiction). Auschwitz survivor Simone Lagrange recalls that when Barbie and the Gestapo took her away, Mme. Bontout was the only neighbor to react. She reached out to the little girl and tried to grab her away. The effort failed, but Simone Lagrange has never forgotten it.

Hotel Terminus is a somber, even bleak film, but not ponderous. Ophuls' personality has never been more in evidence. He even takes a swatch of film to speak directly to the camera, re-enacting with an assistant how the filmmakers contact their sources. His anger there, and in interviews, is sharp and hot, fueling our own will to continue sorting out the characters and their roles in making evil possible. As usual, his interviewing skills are unparalleled; he asks the question that puts a spin on a bland comment.

The film leaves some questions less thoroughly explored than others, revealing its European orientation. Ophuls is far more exercised on the question of collaboration in Vichy France than he is about the American anti-communist crusade. You want to know more, as you watch, about the perceived threat of communism, and whether the American military officials who used Barbie truly believed the witch-hunting rhetoric of the time. Perhaps what we need is a *The Sorrow and the Pity* about our own national anti-communist mythology.

Outrage infuses *Hotel Terminus*, yet the film has a hopeful counter-theme. If evil is not merely individual, neither is good. Ophuls could not have undertaken such an enterprise without the help and the work of others, some of whom appear on screen. He has succeeded in making a film on the most difficult of subjects, the invisible ideology of the ordinary. *Hotel Terminus* is about the texture of amoral public policy, reinforced by privatized morality, and about the intolerable cost of the two forces in conjunction. ■

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ACLU

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position, they are implying that it cannot be decided by majority rule—through elections and legislatures. Instead the decision must be left in the hands of appointed judges, whose only responsibility is to the constitutional word. The ACLU has aroused many Americans' ire because they think that it has illegitimately stepped over this line and deprived them of their right to decide social questions.

Aryeh Neier has recognized this danger. Writing in 1982, after his tenure as director, Neier defended the organization's legal case against the war, but questioned whether it should have pursued it. The ACLU's case "deserved to fail," Neier wrote. "The effort to obtain political justice should have been directed to the representative branches of government. Had opponents of the war 'won' a court decision, almost certainly it would have had no effect on the war, but it could have seriously impaired the judiciary."

A similar argument could be made about the ACLU's attempt to take on issues that are not strictly constitutional. The ACLU's public credibility has always rested on its defense of the Bill of Rights. By identifying itself with extra-constitutional political positions—whether of the left or the right—the organization risks misunderstanding of its basic purpose and leaves itself open to eggregious attacks from political opponents.

Obscene T-shirts: ACLU critics also charge that the organization does not merely defend the individual against the society, but seems ready to sacrifice the legitimate needs of the society and the community for indi-

vidual rights. Here, too, most of the cases cited reflect dissatisfaction with the ACLU's inherently unpopular mandate to defend the Bill of Rights, but some cases do raise questions about the organization's judgment.

The ACLU has rightly come to the defense of the exclusionary rule, which under the Fourth Amendment excludes evidence obtained through "unreasonable searches and seizures." But it has applied the Fourth Amendment to the use of metal detectors in airports to spot hijackers and in Detroit high schools to screen out weapons. Metal detectors do not represent an intrusive search, and their use cuts down dramatically on crime. On Fourth Amendment grounds the ACLU also has opposed pre-announced spot checks to discover drunk drivers.

Elliott Currie, the liberal author of *Confronting Crime*, said, "In the minds of a lot of people, including myself, the ACLU has tilted the balance between civil liberties and public safety too much away from public safety."

The ACLU has rightly defended minority religious groups that objected to prayer in schools or to publicly financed displays of Christian or Jewish religion, arguing that these activities violate the First Amendment provision against an "establishment of religion." But the ACLU has also argued against granting tax exemption to religious groups—a measure that does not favor a particular religious establishment.

The ACLU successfully defended the right of high school students to wear black armbands protesting the Vietnam War, but it also threatens schools that want to impose dress codes. Last month a Rockville, Md., high school principal—supported by the

teachers, the student council and the student newspaper—banned obscene T-shirts. The principal contended that the shirts made it harder for teachers to perform their primary task of educating students. The local ACLU fired off a letter saying that the ban violates students' constitutional right of free expression.

Prominent ACLU leaders often disagree with the organization's own positions. Herman Schwartz, professor of law at American University, finds the ACLU's stand against metal detectors puzzling. "Since I do a lot of flying, I would disagree radically with that position," he said.

Aryeh Neier disagrees with the ACLU stand against weapons searches in high schools and against tax exemption for religious groups. Neier also said he thinks that "a school has the right to regulate behavior so that it is not disruptive."

While supportive of the ACLU's general direction, Schwartz thinks that some local affiliates are driven by a kind of "slippery-slope" argument, affiliates believing that any abridgement of individual rights will open the door to wholesale repression.

Neier sees a similar principle operating. "There is a tendency within the ACLU, having established a certain number of principles, not to be willing to avoid those cases that carry the principles to extremes. It tends ultimately to undercut what the ACLU stands for," he said.

Individual vs. the community: These charges against the ACLU have affected different constituencies. Conservatives are most exercised that the ACLU mixes politics and law. They fear the ACLU as a potent lobby that can marshal constitutional legiti-

macy for its political purposes. Well before George Bush attacked the ACLU, the conservative weekly *Human Events* had raised the specter of Dukakis' ACLU membership in a front-page feature.

But the charge that most clearly resonates outside of Washington is that the ACLU favors unbridled license. The ACLU's more extreme positions on crime, religion and the schools appear to threaten Americans' need to maintain stable communities and educate their children. John Atlas, a Legal Services lawyer and co-chair of New Jersey Citizen Action, said of the ACLU, "Like all the liberals, they don't understand people's concern about community, crime and about preserving values that are important to them."

For many middle-class Americans the ACLU does not stand for individual rights, but rather for a kind of radical individualism that defies any attempt at civic solidarity. To them, the ACLU is a disintegrative force—no less so than a runaway corporation or a Colombian drug lord. The Bush campaign understood this. If Dukakis campaign officials learned it, they learned it too late.

The ACLU will certainly survive the election of 1988—indeed, Bush's attacks against the organization have brought new members and contributors. The danger, as one ACLU official privately stated, is that Bush's attacks and the response by the ACLU faithful may create a kind of smug arrogance within the organization—Gulliver in the land of the Yahoos. While Bush's attacks were irresponsible, the ACLU would be mistaken to dismiss the way they resonated among the middle class or to ignore the extent to which the organization might have unnecessarily provoked them. □

Guatemala

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of improving their living conditions. A people with a rebellious tradition—it took the Spaniards six years to defeat them—their cultural center is located in Nebaj and the nearby towns of Chajul and Cotzal. The area is known locally as the Ixil Triangle.

An obvious army presence: Until a few years ago planes and helicopters regularly bombarded villages and guerrilla fronts in the Triangle's rugged Cuchumatanes mountains. Nebaj residents dared not walk more than a few kilometers outside of town for fear of being labeled rebel collaborators.

The army still maintains an obvious presence in this picturesque Ixil town. Soldiers patrol the town center 24 hours a day, block pedestrian traffic along main arteries and peer out from narrow slits at strategic guard posts.

On Nebaj's outskirts some 350 newly arrived refugees are huddled under tin-roofed shelters and given food, clothing and medical attention. In the first six months of this year 2,900 Ixils turned themselves over to local military authorities, according to Lt. Elvy Leonel Alburez, the army's head of civilian affairs in Nebaj. And unlike EGP officer Cobo, most have returned voluntarily and in poor shape. They have come naked or dressed in rags, ill with goiters and nagging coughs and near starvation from a diet of grass soups and bark teas.

Jose Raymundo Perez, 43, came back in May with his wife and eight children. They fled their village eight years ago after the army burned it to the ground. Perez' life in the hills consisted of growing food for his family and the guerrillas and laying lethal booby traps for government soldiers. "It was very sad in the mountains," he said. "All our clothes were

gone and we soon forgot what salt and sugar tasted like."

As a rebel collaborator, Perez was ordered to attend a psychological reorientation "in patriotism and nationalism" for 30 days; guerrillas like Cobo must spend up to 90 days. The reorientation included classes on liberty, democracy and the "evils of communism." Afterward, Perez was released to the custody of relatives. Those without families are allowed to return to their villages. If their homes have been destroyed, the peasants are sent to "model villages" built by the army.

These controversial villages are part of the military's counterinsurgency strategy to maintain its control over the countryside. Although the refugees are provided with adequate housing, potable water, electricity and schools, their movements are closely monitored and almost every able-bodied male is pressured to join a "voluntary" civilian patrol. In 24-hour shifts the patrols search local areas for insurgents. In Nebaj a local resident said that recalcitrant males were forced to spend chilly nights without a blanket in a trench dug at the town's military compound until they agreed to participate.

Shrinking hope: Nevertheless, the main source of hope remains President Cerezo, but that hope is dwindling. On Oct. 11, 1987—after 18 months of coup rumors—more than 1,000 troops from two military battalions headed for Guatemala City to overthrow the civilian government. According to a foreign military expert, seven of 19 army zone commanders either actively participated in the coup attempt or were "fence sitters," and six civilians were arrested as co-conspirators.

The rebellious troops never reached the capital and most observers agree they ended their attempt after Cerezo reluctantly ac-

cepted a series of conditions.

In the ensuing months Cerezo's new political agenda became readily apparent: direct talks with the guerrilla coalition were scrapped; the Soviet Union's Tass and Cuba's Prensa Latina news agencies were closed; government purchase of fallow lands for peasant families became less frequent (see accompanying story) negotiations with Soviet bloc countries over restoration of ties were canceled and a cabinet minister who headed the delegation to the Spanish peace talks and advocated bolstering police forces at the expense of the army was replaced.

"It's now a controlled democracy and Cerezo can't go beyond the limits set by the military," said Rolando Castillo, a well-known government critic who has spent seven years in exile in Mexico.

Yet despite achieving many of its goals, the anti-Cerezo right wing still views its old nemesis as a dangerous leftist who must be removed. In late July three more civilians were arrested and charged with conspiring to contract military officers to overthrow the government. One week later more coup rumors circulated after army helicopters buzzed low over the capital and truckloads of troops were seen plying down the road leading to the Atlantic. Cerezo denied there had been an attempt against his government, but sources say he buckled under to more demands, including a promise to purchase new weapons for the war against the guerrillas. And Washington appears ready to comply.

In early October a group of concerned U.S. senators and House members sent a letter to Secretary of State George Shultz asking him to halt a \$13.8 million sale of U.S. arms (20,000 M-16 rifles), the largest American arms purchase by Guatemala since the Carter ban. The

letter reminded Shultz that Congress had refused to send lethal weaponry because of past human rights violations.

Whether or not Cerezo finishes out his five-year term, he is undoubtedly in a weakened state. He has even lost much of his popular support after allowing food and consumer prices to rise. Some opposition politicians say that Cerezo's authority has been so badly eroded that a coup is no longer necessary. "There have been so many concessions that what else do they [the army/business alliance] want?" said Mario Solorzano, a 1986 presidential candidate for the Popular Socialist Party.

Yet even an enfeebled Cerezo remains determined to advance his hearts-and-minds policy, even though the guerrillas continue to ambush soldiers, lay mines and stop buses in remote areas to extract money or give passengers a political lecture. If Cerezo falls in a military coup, however, few barriers will remain to prevent his conservative critics from launching a "final offensive" against the insurgents and their civilian supporters.

In the meantime, even a more humanistic war policy does not signal that victory is at hand. Most Guatemala experts agree that unless there are meaningful social reforms to alleviate the miserable conditions of the nation's majority, future generations are destined to join guerrilla forces. And even a reduced number of rebels can wreak havoc on future governments.

"Whether it's 700 or more guerrillas really isn't the issue," said Mike Shawcross, an Englishman who directs a social foundation for the Ixils in Nebaj. "Sufficiently motivated, even 700 people could do terrific damage into the next century." □

Jack Epstein is a San Francisco-based journalist. He recently traveled to Guatemala.

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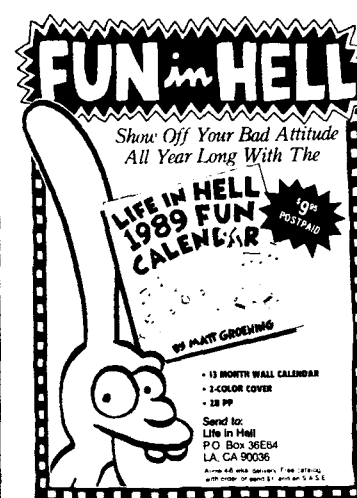
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CALENDAR

Use the Calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is \$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of ITT Calendar.

CHICAGO November 10

Before you vote in '88, see the film that's shocked audiences across the country. "Highly explosive," says Variety.... "Quite convincing and dare frightening," reports the New York Post. COVERUP: BEHIND THE IRAN CONTRA AFFAIR has already been seen by audiences in New York, Boston and Denver and is currently showing through November 10 at Chicago Filmmakers, 1229 W. Belmont in Chicago. Tickets are \$5 and may be obtained by calling Filmmakers at (312) 281-8788. The film is in national distribution and is currently showing in Madison, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Austin, Boulder and Philadelphia, among others. For theaters and show-times near you contact (213) 828-8807.

LOS ANGELES November 11

Public Forum: "After Reagan: Directions for a New Democratic Left" with Michael

Harrington, Barbara Ehrenreich, UFW Vice President Delores Huerta (invited), LA Councilmember Ruth Galanter, and with music by Ruben Guevara and Con Safos on Friday, November 11, 8 p.m. at the Bay View Plaza Holiday Inn, 530 W. Pico in Santa Monica. Directions: two blocks south of Santa Monica Freeway at Lincoln Blvd. exit. Parking available. Admission: \$5. Childcare provided. For more information, call (213) 392-7690. Sponsored by the Democratic Socialists of America in conjunction with the DSA National Board meeting November 11-13.

EVANSTON, IL November 11

Amnesty International's Evanston Group will be hosting a symposium on Human Rights Under Perestroika: Practices and Prospects, on Friday, Nov. 11 at the First Baptist Church of Evanston, 607 Lake Street. Among the panelists will be a representative of the U.S. State Department and a representative from the Soviet Embassy in Washington, DC. The forum will include an overview from each representative of current human rights conditions in the Soviet Union and an estimation of where things are headed. In addition, there will be an open discussion-period for questions and comments from the audience. Admission is free.

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NEW YORK CITY November 12

Building Alliances with Labor Unions—a one-day training for organizers. The National Unemployed Network, a coalition of low-income people's organizations fighting for economic justice, is holding an organizing training to help grassroots groups gain the support of labor unions for their work. Participants will include: Jerry Tucker, Regional Director, UAW; Ray Rogers, Corporate Campaign, Inc.; Leanna Noble, Plant Closures Project and John Dodds, Philadelphia Unemployment Project. Event is open to the public and will take place at the Empire State College Center for Labor Studies, 330 W. 42nd St., 2nd fl., from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday, November 12; \$10. For more information contact (215) 592-0937.

NEW YORK CITY December 3

"Women in Unions: Rights and Realities," strengthening working women's participation in, and control of, their unions. Speakers: Margarita Aguilar (NYU Clericals), Ida Torres (RWDSU), Susan Jennik (AUD), Cynthia Long (Electricians), others, including educators, public employees, carpenters, hospital workers, etc. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 3, 330 W. 42nd St., \$10 registration. For information call Association for Union Democracy, (718) 855-6650.

LIFE IN HELL

LIFE IN HELL

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CHAPTER 15
THE 16 TYPES OF SISTERS

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UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM

Pint-sized spin merchants mouth off

By Eve R. Wirth

WITHOUT A DOUBT, IF VOTES WERE cast for the funniest comedians in our nation, children would win by a landslide. Teachers can attest to this, as they are witnesses (part of their fringe benefits) to copious classroom gems delivered via exams, reports and homework assignments. During my delightful decade of teaching elementary school children, I came across some of the zaniest material ever scribbled. Clearly, these kids showed an amazing ability to understand, generalize and draw their own conclusions about the world. What follows are some examples of grade-schoolers' "spin" on presidential politics.

"Holding a caucus is holding a dead horse."

Question: "What do you think was our first president's most outstanding feat?" Answer: "For sure, I don't know, but I think it was his right foot, because it had more foot power."

"Trying to get the job of president means this: he has it hard while he is trying to get in, and once he is in, it is just as hard, and maybe even harder to do a real good job."

One girl writes: "Presidents have to have good eyes and ears, and top of the line brains. Their voice is necessary for speeching and not get laryngitis. They should, my goodness, not be careless and take better care of their health."

Another girl approaches the qualifications for being president from a different perspective: "A president has to be a responsible, upright person. He can't be a person who fools around with the 'you know what I mean kind of person.' And furthermore, he shouldn't commit appaltry, when he is married. If he is not married, appaltry can be committed, but not in public areas of the city."

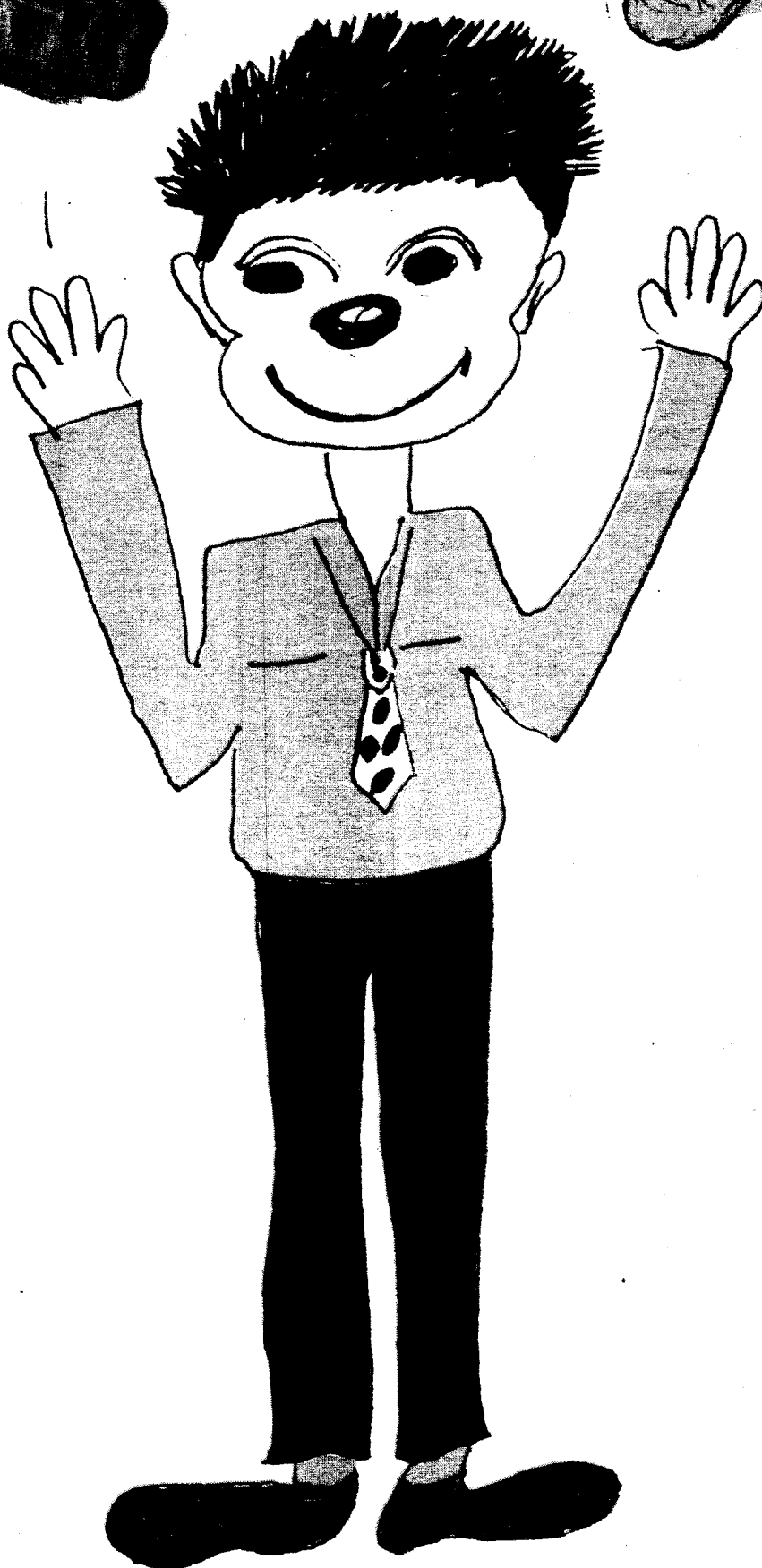
What do you make of this? "9/10enths of a president's time is taken up for doing his duty, and the 1/10enths left is for marriage." And this: "Chancywise, the chances of being voted as president are six of one and one for all."

Some of the kids mangle their metaphors: "A president has to work around the clock and even longer." "When a candidate loses the election, how he feels is like, your gas is as good as mine."

One girl captured the spirit, if not the letters: "Every four years a new president is elected. This is called demockracy because we the people of the United States can vote him in. If he did a hot honoraball job, we all say life is a bowel of cherries, but if he did not, we get mad, feel bad and say life is a bowel of pooey."

Another child did a variation on this theme. In bold letters she printed: "When a candidate runs for office, he promises to make life better for us all. He even goes around kissing

"A president is the most impotent man in the white House"



Drawing by anonymous grade-school political cartoonist.

babies, and is always smiling. And taxpayers go around whistling, everything's coming up roses. Well, later like after he moves into the White House, we find out, he didn't keep his promises. So what do we do you ask? You know, we grumble, mumble and inbetween locked teeth we whistle, everything's coming up stinkweeds."

One boy did some historical comparisons concerning presidents. From his observations he stated, "Candidates running for president these days are a far cry from men like Washington and Lincoln, who never did bad things that were discovered. Washington had only a small thing like his cherry affair under a tree, and Lincoln, poor guy, the only thing he did wrong was getting assassinated in bed. But in modern times, runners for president are getting caught in graft and sinful extra, outside marriage affairs. If Washington and Lincoln knew this, they would roll over in their tomes and put a fast stop to this."

Question: "How long is the president generally in office?" Answer: "Generally, he is 5'12" or maybe even six feet."

Just in case your knowledge of presidential elections is a bit hazy, and you need a quick refresher course, read what these 11-year-olds scawled:

"A president is the most impotent man in the White House."

"The president to be finds out for sure if he won or lost on November the somethingth."

"Getting our vote is uppermoist in a candidate's mind. After it's over, our vote is undermoist."

"A president gets elected for four years, never on an anal basis."

Question: "Name three qualifications for the presidency." Answer: "Do good talking, smiling, and play good golf."

Speculating on a woman president brought a mixed response:

"The chances of a lady ever being president of the U.S. are mathically speaking, not likely out of a hundred."

"The gander of a candidate should not make a difference to become president unless if you are prickment. Then gander is important."

"A woman can in all probaball become president the day they run out of good men candidates, like when they become eggstink."

One boy summed up the whole process succinctly: "Teacher said to write a brief essay about what I learned about president elections. It can be as brief as 40 words. The essay should tell about things like elections, crocuses, campaigns. I have now hit 40 words exactly HERE. P.S. I hope I passes."

Yes, Eric passed, and so did each and every one of my students. ■

Eve R. Wirth, a former grade-school teacher, is a psychotherapist and freelance writer.

Design: Jennifer Berman